

TOM LONGBOAT'S RUN OF FOURTEEN MILES.

A REMARKABLE PERFORMANCE.

ENTHUSIASTIC SCENES.

Our Kilmallock correspondent writes:—

"Good luck, Tom!" went up from a hundred throats as Longboat started on his journey of fourteen miles. The sky was clear, the sun shone brilliantly with intense heat, while the track—the public road—was covered with a thick coat of dust. The "send off," which was enthusiastic, betokened the feelings of the hundreds of admirers who had foregathered to wish him "God speed." The route taken was circuitous, commencing at his training headquarters, the residence of Mr Flanagan, Kilbreedy, and on by the Ballinvana Creamery to Kilfinane, from there to Kilmallock, and thence back to Kilbreedy. When entering on the stupendous task, Longboat was preceded at some distance by two or three cyclists to ensure a clear road, while he was followed by his trainer, Tom Flanagan, who was seated on a car, while thirty or forty cars of various descriptions and as many cyclists joined in, all of which formed an extensive procession, in which ladies garbed in bright hues appropriate to summer contributed a conspicuous part. The different points of vantage along the route were availed of by numerous spectators, who cheered Longboat as he led his attendants at a merry pace. Many of those dropped out from exhaustion, while others at different points joined the throng, but when four miles had been covered not a half a dozen of the original muster was to be seen. "The pace that kills," and so they had realised. On sped Longboat with a regular step, with that ease of movement and calm demeanour in which were reposed every evidence of a confidence that would be justified.

At Kilfinane a vast concourse of people awaited his arrival, and as he passed through the streets he was accorded a great ovation. Here the number of cyclists was considerably increased, but in a short time Longboat had spread havoc in their ranks, for in their efforts to keep up with him they ran into each other, with the result that they went sprawling about the road, while on went Longboat, pursuing the even tenor of his way, amid the plaudits of the people. Those who lined the road to see him pass got the first intimation of his approach by the distant cloud of dust half-a-mile in length, which every moment came nearer and nearer until within two hundred yards, when Longboat was observed a few yards ahead of the mass of men and women, cars and bicycles, all of which were enveloped in the pulverised limestone, which gave them a hoary appearance, in which they scarcely could be recognised. Along came Longboat, with a scorching sun beating on him; he steps from the centre to the side of the road, and glides along without a perceptible effort, and is immediately lost to view. He proceeds to Kilmallock in a uniform pace and with perfect equanimity, to the admiration and wonder of the people. In Kilmallock the streets are crowded, while a flag, the "Stars and Stripes," floats from the Run o' Luck. Longboat continued his course to the accompaniment of the cheers of the population. He was not well outside the town on his homeward journey to Kilbreedy, when he quickened his pace, and soon the cyclists were again in difficulties, for try as they would, Longboat sailed away from them. When twelve miles had been covered he negotiated a steep hill as if he had not travelled half-a-mile that day, and continued to stride along for two miles to the finish with a swiftness that was amazing, and which provoked a scene of unbounded enthusiasm. A remarkable feature of Longboat's performance is that in his movements he does not create the impression that he is going fast; this is due to the fact that he moves with an absolute ease; there is no effort; no moving of the hands or shoulders—in fact, he glides over the road in the same manner up hill or down hill, but when the eyes are turned on the pursuing cyclists with every nerve strained, with whips applied to horses in the endeavour to keep up with Longboat, it is then that one is able to form an estimate and be convinced of how quick he travels.

His task on this occasion, which was performed with so much merit, was a great achievement. The heat was intense, and the traffic stirred up the dust to a disagreeable extent, while it is feared that many of his admirers in their anxiety to be near did Longboat no service—in fact, a body of cyclists kept so close that there was imminent danger if their rushing on to him, and even apart from that contingency, the noise, confusion, and dust which they stirred up were conditions that could not help him in the trying ordeal. Of course everyone meant well, but when they reflect on the situation they will agree that a little more accommodation could not fail to be of advantage to the runner, and in the discharge of so arduous a task Longboat's welfare should be the first consideration.

On Saturday Longboat will run from Limerick to Kilmallock, a distance of 21 miles.