

Track

THE WARRIOR, THE SHEEP HERDER AND THE BARBER

It is 490 B.C. A Greek Warrior staggers into the Athenian Market place. He announces a great victory over the Persians and drops lifeless to the ground. He has just run from the plains of Marathon, where the armies of Greece triumphed over the forces of Darius. His act gives the news of victory to thousands of anxious peoples; it gives distance running the Marathon run.

It is 1896 A.D. A humble sheep herder moves with sturdy stride down the final stretch of the first Olympic stadium. He is pursued along the side lines by a Prince top hat in hand. The runner is Louis the Greek, and he is winning the first of the marathons of the modern Olympic Games. The Persian is Prince Alex who, minus dignity and top hat, leads the rejoicing of the Greek nation. An otherwise disappointing Olympiad is saved; a famous run is reincarnated.

It is 1908. Again an Olympic Stadium. A groggy Italian barber flashes into sight. An excited and overzealous official hovers on the side lines.

Dorando Petri staggers into the stadium. He misses the track; he falls; he recovers; and he falls again. The Official assists him. He plunges on ! Again he staggers ! The official keeps him from falling. Finally he plunges in sheer exhaustion across the finish line.

Johnny Hayes, a clerk from the store of John Wanamakers, trots in several minutes later. Dorandi is disqualified for receiving assistance and Hayes is awarded the Wreath of Olympic victory.

Human interest ? Most certainly ! Hardly any sport furnishes such gigantic moments as does distance running. Or so many painful ones ! A warrior, a sheep-herder and a barber, each supreme in his own time, made distance running history. And exerted an influence that makes the sport live today.

But why go outside of Cornell history for remarkable performances ? With my ever ready scrapbook to jog a fading memory I unearth such quotations as these

Jan. 1921. Cornell Runners Push Britishers on Greatest Race England Ever Saw.

Varsity springs surprise on British Public and nearly registers sensational victory - Final Score 26 to 29.

Cornell can find glory in defeat, when she reviews the remarkable record of her Cross Country Team abroad. That an American university team could meet Oxford - Cambridge harriers in their own territory and keep victory in doubt until the last man had crossed the tape is nothing short of phenomenal - and Moakley.

Oct. 1921. Cornell's Cross Country Feat.

The history of Cross Country running has no record of such

a finish as that made by Cornell in the Syracuse invitation meet on October 29, when four Red and White runners crossed the line abreast at the close of the four and a half mile race. Cornell had a perfect score of 15, with Syracuse, M.I.T., Yale, Dartmouth, Colgate, and Columbia ranging in order from 75 to 168. The first five to finish were Cornellians. The four runners tied for first were C.C.Carter, R.E.Brown, N.P. Brown and G. Miske. Their time of 22 minutes and 49 seconds set a new record for the course.

Nov. 1921.

Cornell sets new low score to win Cross Country Intercollegiates. R. E. Brown individual winner sets new course record. Cornellians N.P.Brown and C.C.Carter follow in close order. Ithacans finish 1, 2, 3, 5, 8. Cornell's low score is 18 points. Crawford of Lafayette who finished sixth does not count in team score since he competed as an individual.

And then came the long lean years ! Henry Ford and General Motors have leveled the hills of Ithaca and the Cornell Cross Country team has been bowing to Syracuse, Penn State, Michigan State, Yale, etc. Yes, we have 4 legs on the cup, but so have Penn State and Syracuse. Who will take permanent possession ? The answer rests with the determined little band that annually throws the chicken feed at Varna.

J. R. Bangs