

The Wheeler.

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The Cuca Cup Race: and its Moral.

THIS event, which must be considered the chief race of the year, is neither a sermon nor a fable. Yet it has its lessons and its moral. Among these we point to the fact of the enormous attendance, which was quite without precedent at a cycle race in England, and exemplified the peculiarity of popular taste. The large crowd at the start could not hope or expect to see anything very startling in the way of racing, and the large crowd at the finish came to witness and welcome an unbeatable certainty, as must have been evident from the reports in the daily press, and more particularly from those in the evening papers, which are published every morning. The incidents of the contest are fully dealt with elsewhere, and we need do little else than point to the complete failure of the sporting prophets, none of whom got near the probable placed men. Bidlake was reckoned to finish next Shorland, but it was obvious that the tricycle suited him better than the two-wheeler. He continued riding up till 200 miles, but then, being outside his own trike times, he went out of the business. Carlisle had previously given up, being very saddle-sore, and not feeling particularly well at the start. Fontaine rode remarkably during the early stages, but lack of experience of an all day ride upon the track told its inevitable tale, and he ceased to persevere soon after completing the triple century. Wridgway afforded a good deal of surprise, as he was reputed to be fit and well, though it must be admitted he looked somewhat fine. Horton made a remarkably good show, and many were sorry to see him give up when, strangely enough, he had covered precisely the same distance as Fontaine. Knight, on a Bantam, persevered very pluckily, but too high gearing was not without its results. It is a mistake for the crowd to look on Field as the last man: he was not so, for he occupied sixth place. In a race where distance is the object it is true that the first man to finish is usually the last man to finish, so far as the contest is concerned. And thus Field, though apparently the last man to finish, yet beats all those who finished before him, to the number of twelve. But he did not, of course, beat any of those who finished at the same time, namely, when pistol-fire announced the conclusion of the hard-fought contest. Hsley made a plucky show, persevering in slow and steady style until the approaching end of the race caused him to liven up very considerably. Clark rode in fine style, his pose and evenness of pedalling justly securing many admirers. He is undoubtedly a long-distance rider of high calibre. Chapple was, perhaps, the biggest surprise of the meeting. He rode grandly up till about three-quarters of the time, but then was pegged back by Peter-

sen, who exhibited staying powers of exceedingly high order. To Frank Shorland, the winner, we extend our very heartiest congratulations. To say that his performance showed energy, pluck, and endurance such as the world has never before seen, by no means overstates the facts of the case. He has triumphed over all opponents, he has brought the long-distance record back to England, and carried out a ride which alone would make his name a household word in the cycling world. We mentioned just now the moral of the race: and this will be found when the reader refers to our table of gearing. With the exception of Bidlake, who had not recovered from a very severe fall, and who is not suited by a bicycle so well as by a three-wheeler,

Shorland rode the machine with the lowest gear in the race. Still, it will not be argued that this affected his pace to any great detriment, and there can be no question that the made matters far too warm for those whose machines were more highly geared. Yet the day was such when high gear would have been shown to the very best possible advantage, the conditions were so equable, and there would never at any time even the slightest wind be faced. This fact should not be lost upon those of our readers who think that increase of pace is a necessary consequent upon increase of gear. In fine: we need do no more than commend the facts to all who are interested, and to congratulate most heartily all who are concerned.



Photo. by B. Scamell, 120, Crouch Hill, London.

FRANK SHORLAND,

Thrice Winner of the Cuca Cup, and Holder of 24 Hours' World's Record.