

Doncaster Gazette – 2nd August 1850

The extraordinary pedestrian feat of walking one thousand miles in one thousand hours, at Sheffield, has excited intense interest in the sporting world. The intrepid, the indefatigable, the unwearable Richard Manks, has accomplished this wonderful undertaking. Before giving a description of the unparalleled event, we will briefly notice the incidents antecedent to the great task. Barrack Tavern, Sheffield, is entitled to the credit of testing the physical strength and enduring qualities which man can undergo. It is recorded that a small knot of friends were recounting in an inner apartment of the inn in question the pedestrian deeds and exploits of the competitors of the turf; noting how its various athletic votaries had been crowned with wreaths of triumph, and how their laurels have been dishevelled and scattered to the winds; and that the sporting records humorously exhibit their transitory triumph, when sometimes running, and sometimes walking, sometimes winning and sometimes losing. "Not so," vociferated an old veteran, "there is one man recorded in one fete, forty-two years since performed, that has never been equalled, and consequently never been beaten; the celebrated Captain Barclay, who walked 1000 miles in 1000 hours."—"Mine Host," springing on his human pedestals, with a joyous alacrity that astounded his guests exclaimed, if any man of any colour, nation, size, or weight, will on this ground, Captain Barclay's feat of walking 1,000 miles in 1,000 hours, to him will I give the sum of £50. This generous offer, on the part of Mr. Broadbent, was considered a bold stroke, and no more was heard of it until the present herculean hero, who hailed the worthy landlord, and shook his hand in token of acceptance of his much honoured gratuity. The terms were speedily settled; and Manks wishing it to be distinctly understood that he should expect to be fairly and honestly, daily and nightly, watched and identified. In Captain Barclay," observed the veteran, "I have an honoured master to succeed, and faithfully will I follow his integrity in accomplishing this valorous deed. Nay more, up to Captain Barclay's time, his task was never performed by man; and he elected to walk the last quarter and the first quarter of every hour, thereby reserving to himself one entire hour and a half for sleep. Richard Manks has long boasted of his lasting qualities, and now he will try to push human nature a step higher in the soak of endurance than did his honoured prototype, Captain Barclay, and start at the strike of every hour ; leaving three quarters of an hour only for rest, instead of one hour and a half—with this reserved permission, that if Richard Manks's constitution will not sustain the embargo he himself has thus laid upon it, he shall be allowed to avail himself of the alternative and stipulated offer, to complete the undertaking by going to hid task the last and first quarter of every hour."

This it appears, Richard Manks courted no favour; but his sole anxiety was to perform the feat fairly and honourably.

Monday the 17th of June, and just at the head of the parish church, the clock pointed to eleven minutes past five o'clock, did Richard Manks commence his famous feat of 1,000 miles in 1,000 hours, at the Barrack Tavern Cricket-ground, for a gratuity of £60, voluntarily undertaking to attempt to accomplish it by each and every mile being walked at the strike of every hour. The pedestrian had not more than six days' notice; and as a matter of course, had no time to undergo training for the occasion.

His distance was measured from a given point on the ground, and he walked six yards from his bed-side to a staircase, having 12 deep steps, and then proceeded from the

foot thereof to the starting post, another distance of 28 yards, having two other descending steps. On the completion of his mile he again walked 22 yards, ascending 14 steps to reach his bed, altogether making, inclusive of the measurement of the staircase 62 yards, which being multiplied by 1,000, gives 62,000 yards, or 36 miles 400 yards over and above the stipulated distance of 1,000 miles, independent of the additional labour of lifting himself up the staircase to his apartment. The most correct designation of his chamber is an attic in the saddle of the roof, with a very confined ventilation, and subject to such sudden thermometer transitions that a Fahrenheit would exhibit in every ridiculous degree. On first entering this apartment a stranger feels oppressed, and in contact with the exhalations of the vapour of camphor, opodeldoc, oils, and other mysterious phials from the pharmacopolist, and intermixed with the narcotic fumes from the weed of tobacco pipes, as well as exhalations creeping in at the small wicket window, from the effluvia of carnivorous animal excrements, and other evacuations which adulterate the verdant nosegay breeze, that the approaching scenery seems anxious to minister to comfort. Nothing can be said of the stillness of his closet, which at times rings with the resounded clamour of voices below, except we speak of the delightful quiet of the early morn and which is only disturbed by his attendant's imperative command to duty. His style of walking is stated to be to bend forward his body, whereby he throws its weight on the knees. His step was short, and his feet were raised only a few inches from the ground, which quickened his pace, and enabled him to walk with more ease to himself, and better able to endure the fatigue of his journey than by walking perfectly erect, which would throw too much of the weight of the body on the ankle joints. He walked in light shoes and lamb's-wool stockings, which preserved his feet from injury. He has, however, suffered much from the heel of the right foot, which is extremely tender, and continued so unto the end of his task. He packed the inside of his shoe-heels with a portion of horse-hair sock. He was afflicted with a blister three inches in length, and charged with a great quantity of fluid, upon which he resolutely and clumsily operated with his own blunted penknife. In fact both feet have undergone frequent scarifications at the hands of the surgeon. Swelling in the groins, induced by ascending the staircase, alternately affected now the right side, then the left, at another time the left knee, then the right, and, with attentive applications, finally disappeared. At one time his condition was as various as a railway time table, and his more sanguine friends were plunged in a vortex of despair that he would not sustain the completion of his undertaking. There was a favourable coldness of the extremities which physically accounts for his wakefulness. He was frequently rubbed with oils, spirits of camphor, &c, to prevent rigidity of the joints and limbs, and a simple tonic admixture was occasionally administered by Mr. W. H. Booth, surgeon, to keep up the tone and action of the stomach. There was no appearance of apprehended swelling of the legs, which was prevented by the curvature formation of his bed. When aroused, he rose up at once, with great mechanical rapidity, buckled on his belt, spoke laconically, seized his stick with a tight grip, stared intensely with fierce and powerfully dilated eyes, as if he were about to start into paroxysms of exclamations. His skin was remarkable for its transparency, developing every artery and exhibiting a fine muscular and anatomical picture.

When he commenced his task, he weighed eleven stone three pounds, and, on being put into scale, after five week's toil, the result showed a diminution of twenty-six pounds. He craved much for good old ale, but got none; eat heartily of sago puddings, steaks, chops, lamb, fowl, rabbit, or any other cogitated dainty provided for him. He drank bottled porter, light sherry wine, and when overtaken by morbid torpidity, he partook freely of an admixture of rum, milk, and egg. He was the most inclined to profound sleep from two to eight in the morning. He varied his shoes from leather to carpet as the necessity of his feet required, sometimes walking under acute punishment, and at other times under no apparent inconvenience, reliefs secured by surgical operations and applications. The pathway of his route being laid with ashes, loose portions were frequently taken from his shoes. At times he was so drowsy that

spectators greatly annoyed him, from fear that his feet might suffer additional damage, as well as from an annoyance in not being able to see the beaten track before him. His eyes did not yet appear to suffer so extremely as might be anticipated. Of course the brain being first affected, the eye, through its connection with the optic nerve, is the first external sense that becomes fatigued. The eye is not only the instrument of vision, it is the brain or organ of thought that truly sees. The proximate cause of sleep is technically "the depression of the laminae of the cerebrum and the afflux of blood to the brain." Therefore, in the effort to avoid the natural return of sleep the instrument of sight will first cease to act, by the closing of the eyelids; the smell becomes dormant only after the taste, the hearing after the smell, and the touch after the hearing; the muscles of the limbs, being relaxed, cease to act before those that support the head, and before those of the spine. Manks suffered under none of these symptoms, his feet were the only questionable drawback on his undertaking. On the 9th of July, at two o'clock in the morning, he performed his route not as a sleep-walker, but as a person all but asleep, and to the surprise of his attendant, he found him lying on one of the railings of the green. Aroused, he resumed with renewed energy, and completed his mile in fifteen minutes and eleven seconds. During the visitation of electric phenomena on Thursday, Manks walked in the midst of the awful grandeur of rain, thunder and lightning, like a wandering Ajax braving the aroused elements. He proceeded to his task true to his appointed time, in running gear, having cast aside his flannel drawers and jacket; as he proceeded he lathered his body and head with a profusion of soap, which rendered him imitative of a Grecian moveable statue; thus marching under the shower bath of heaven, he finished his mile like a giant refreshed and cleansed from bodily impurities. He was afterwards submitted to considerable rubbing.

On Monday, the 22nd of July, Manks was pursuing his journey in a miraculous manner, and invigorated style, completing his progressive miles in the space of 10 minutes and 20 seconds. Upon the whole, Richard Manks must be viewed as a most extraordinary man, who gives unparalleled evidence of the vigour that the human frame derives from exercise. The marginal brow of the proximate hills at Uppertorpe, within a bowshot of the grounds, were continuously dotted with clusters of anxious human beings, looking down upon the enchanting panoramic movements of the thousands below, and apparently catching the optical telegraphic excitement that moves the masses, when the shout proclaims, "he's coming."

On Tuesday morning, the 23d, the morning broke with a sultry attenuated atmosphere, which continued during the day, whilst the throng of popular excitement was not, in the least, abated. In the morning Manks suffered severely from a powerful determination of blood to the brain, superinducing strong feverish pain on both sides the head, neck, shoulders and breast, accompanied with wakeful restlessness and personal anxiety, which were not allayed until the evening of the day. His eyelids then were wont to close, but the intense anxiety of his mind about the shortness of his time struggled to forbid them. At 11 o'clock at night, in answer to a question put by the writer, Manks stated that if he were, in strict sense, and just then to will that he would go to sleep, he could at once, plunge into such a vortex of oblivion as, he thought, would bid defiance to human ingenuity to awaken him until reposing nature was satisfied. His memory suffered considerably, and when called into action, there was a pause, whilst the wandering eye stared as if upon vacancy.

On the 25th, 26th, and 27th of July, Manks had to go the distance in heavy showers of rain; but evidently suffered nothing there from. Early in the week there was much well grounded anxiety as to the issue of the enterprise. Continued hot weather proved very trying, and began to operate obviously on the hero's feet, while the terrible fatigue took effect upon the brain. The incipient state of *delirium tremens* had begun, and by nothing short of the best possible management, was that alarming disorder repressed - perhaps we may say suppressed. A superficial observer would, on Friday night, never have dreamt that Manks had gone through such an appalling amount of fatigue. His fine athletic form was unbent, his carriage erect and

commanding, his step light and elastic, and his spirit buoyant. On a closer scrutiny it was apparent that his mind wandered somewhat, but not so as to excite much uneasiness. This week the interest evinced in the gigantic task increased, attracting all ranks *of* spectators, including magistrates, professional men, and others of the same condition. As might be expected, here and there, scattered about the town, you met with persons who talked about collusion; about substituting in the still night a sham Manks for the real Manks. These knowing ones must have been sadly in the dark as to the well-arranged system of checks constantly in operation. Independent of a relay of official time-keepers, there was seldom less than a score, often many hundreds, of amateurs, not a few of them having what to them are heavy stakes depending on the issue. As the pedestrian began his hourly task punctually at the commencement of each hour, people knew when to look out for him; and seldom an hour passed without his well-known white dress being discerned from numerous lattices or from the adjacent hills. All this was independent of the fact, that, during a score or so of every 24 hours, the arena and every large object upon it, was distinctly seen both far and near. How, then, could deception be possible?

On Sunday last, the 28th, the grounds were not opened until the evening; and at that time the rush of spectators exceeded anything ever yet known in the town of Sheffield, not forgetting the renowned Toarnaire equestrian display. So dense and resolute were the masses to obtain ingress and egress that the proprietor of the grounds was compelled to throw open the large gates opposite the barracks, where the influx and reflux was a continued stream of hats, caps, and bonnets. The majority of attendants was in favour of females, whose sympathetic blessings for "poor Dick" were continuously showered upon him. There were not less than 8,000 persons present at one time; the evening was also favourably fine. To maintain order six additional police officers were sent for, and despatched in a hackney coach, but the strictest decorum was observed. The crowds on the distant hills were unprecedented. Manks, on this occasion, walked in his flannel jacket and drawers, though he has on preceding Sabbaths, prudently performed his task in his usual Sunday garments. It was with the utmost difficulty that a clear pathway was kept for him;—notwithstanding these interruptions he surprisingly accomplished those miles in the incredible space of ten minutes, no ordinary work for an unexhausted man. The universal commiseration and expressed respect towards him was not only cheering to the heart of a philanthropist, but manifestly elevated Manks's own spirits. On Monday last, at the break of day, hundreds might be seen wending their way to witness the completion of this pedestrian feat. Every step, while it brought him nearer to the long-sought goal, seemed only to increase his confidence. Like a wearied steed, when he catches a glimpse of the top of a long hill, (barring the weariness), his courage mounts up, like Richard Manks, one of the finest known instances of human fortitude. At five o'clock in the morning the doors of the Barrack Tavern ground were thrown open, and Manks walked that mile in ten minutes; six o'clock, nine minutes twenty seconds; seven o'clock, nine minutes five seconds; and this truly herculean task was finished in eight minutes and fifty-five seconds, after the hour had struck eight a.m., beating Captain Barclay's last mile by six minutes and four seconds. The hero, who has attracted during the progress of the feat nearly 150,000 persons, was welcomed at the close of the last round with loud huzzas, and cheering from all the immense number assembled to witness the close of this unparalleled feat. This great achievement will stamp Richard Manks in the annals of the sporting world, as the renowned master of pedestrianism, and exhibit him to posterity as an unexampled instance of physical endurance and unbounded courage.

From the following table, which has been compiled expressly for this journal, it would appear that the total time occupied in walking the 1,000 miles was 9d.10h.31m.28s, which gives the average time per mile about 13m.35s. The mile which was got over in the least time was on the 42nd day, July 28th, 9 A.M., which was done in 8 min.45 sec. The slowest mile was on the ninth day, June 27th, 7 A.M., which required 20m.10s. The day which occupied the greatest length of time in walking the 24 miles was the fifth, the 21st of June, requiring 384m.14s., or an average of about 16 minutes per mile.