peninsula. The climax of the racing season is the great inter­national ski tournament held annually in February at Holmen- kollen, *6* m. from Christiania. This “ Norwegian Derby ” is divided into two parts, the first devoted to jumping contests, the Other to long-distance racing. The take-off for the jumping contests is built into the side of a hill, and each competitor must jump three times. No staff is allowed and no jump is counted if the jumper falls in alighting. The distances covered are extra­ordinary, 134½ ft. being the record. The jumper, who starts some -distance up the hill, descends at top speed, stoops as he nears the take-off and launches himself into the air with all his force. He maintains an erect position until he reaches the ground, alighting with bended knees, on both feet, one a little in advance of the other, and “ giving ” with his legs to overcome the force of the fall and to preserve his balance. Another feature is double jumping, performed by two persons hand in hand. The highest prize is the King’s Cup. The principal distance race is over a difficult course of about 20 m. The record for 25 kilometres (15½ m.) is 2 hours, 7 min. A Lapp once covered 220 kilometres (about 138 m.) in 21 hrs., 22 min., the country being level. Skiing is very popular in Norway with both men and women; in fact it may be called the national sport of Norway.

The sport has been introduced into other countries where the winter is severe, and has become very popular in Switzerland and the United States, especially in Minnesota and the Rocky Mountain country. The principal club in the British Isles is the “ Ski Club of Great Britain.” The mails between Chile and the Argentine Republic are carried in winter by relays of Norwegian ski-runners, about 300 being employed. The skis worn by them are usually shod with horn. Skis cannot be used with advantage during a thaw or where the snow is less than 6 in. deep. On this account, and because of their general un­wieldiness, they are less convenient in thick forests than the Indian snow-shoe, though faster in the open country.

Ski have been used for military purposes by the Northern peoples for several centuries, and of late years other nations which have mountainous regions of snow have turned their attention to this most useful mode of winter marching. The army of Sweden—under Gustavus Adolphus and his successors one of the foremost in Europe—employed infantry provided with ski in its military operations. In Norway special units so provided were organized in 1710. Recently (1902) the Alpine infantry of France and Italy have taken up the question. In Briançon, attached to the 159th regiment of French infantry, is an *école militaire de ski* (established 1903) which trains the *Chasseurs Alpins* of the 1st line, and also the regional troops which are intended to take part in the defence of the south­eastern frontier of France. These regiments as a rule furnish one officer, one non-commissioned officer and a few soldiers each to every course of instruction, which lasts two months. At the end of the first month the *skieur* is expected in full marching order to cover 60 kilometres (37½ m.) of Alpine territory in the day. The ski are put to a variety of ingenious uses; to form a stretcher-sledge for wounded men; and if rapidity of movement is desired, a horse or pony pulls the *skieur* along by means of long reins attached to the horse’s girth. Even camps in the mountains are improvised. The *skieur* is thickly clothed and muffled, and his eyes are protected against snow­blindness by blue or black spectacles. Some of the performances of soldiers on ski have been notable. Captain Bernard, chief of the *école* of Briançon, ascended the *cols* of Arsiné (24∞ metres) and of the Cauterel (2080 metres) in 16 hours with a party of 25 men. In Russia some Finland troops in full marching order executed a long hunting march in Carelia. In 29 days they covered 860 kilometres. In Switzerland a *skieur* took less than 1½ hours to cover 25 kilometres, including altitudes of 1547 metres. In order to witness this competition, which took place in Glarus, the soldiers from the S. Gothard garrison made a march of 48 kilometres including the ascent of the Klausengrass (2000 metres). A Norwegian soldier named Holte covered with one leap a distance of 21 m. 20 cm., and his companion Heyderdahl later achieved 24.

In Italy each company of *Alpini* has an annual credit for the provision of ski. Their duties in war time are almost the same as those of mounted infantry—exploration and communication, and the seizure of advanced positions.

In the seven months of snow on these frontiers the garrisons of the lonely posts cannot go out save on ski or snow-shoes, as to the respective merits of which military opinion is divided.

See *Norway's National Sport,* by T. W. Schreiner, *Outing,* vol. 37; *Auf Schneeschuhen durch Grönland,* by F. Nansen (Ham­burg, 1891); *Ski-running,* edited by E. C. Richardson (London, 1904); *Year-Book of the Ski Club of Great Britain,*

**SKIBBEREEN,** a market town of county Cork, Ireland, on the river lien about 3 m. from its estuary, 53¾ m. S.W. of Cork by the Cork, Bandon and South Coast railway. Pop. (1901) 3208. The river is navigable for small vessels to Skibbereen itself, and for larger ones to Old Court on the estuary; and the town is a flourishing fishing-station. Trade in corn and other agricultural produce is considerable. This district suffered terribly in the famine of 1847, and hundreds of victims were buried in pits in the graveyard adjoining the ruined Cistercian cell of Abbeystrowry, a mile west of the town. The Ilen offers fishing, late in the season, for brown and sea trout. The main railway continues south to Baltimore, and a light railway runs to the pleasant seaside village of Skull (or Schull), 15 m. W. Skibbereen is governed by an urban district council.

**SKIEN,** a seaport of southern Norway, in Bratsberg *amt* (county), on the river Skien, 5 m. below its issue from Lake Nord, and 6 m. above its outflow into Frier Fjord. Pop. (1900) 11,343. It was mostly rebuilt after a fire in 1886. Here Henrik Ibsen, the dramatist, was born in 1828. In 1892 a canal ascending 189 ft. by means of 17 locks was made between lakes Bandak and Nord, giving access to the Telemark district by way of Dalen. The whole distance between the lakes is 40 m., and several fine falls, as the Ulefos, Eidsfos, and Vrangfos, are passed. The engineering is noteworthy. In the town and district are numerous saw-mills, planing, cotton-spinning and flour-mills, factories for wood-pulp and domestic commodities, also a copper mine (at Omdal). The exports are ice, timber (including tele­graph poles for the British government), wood-pulp and copper, and the imports coal and china-clay. The town (the ancient *Skida)* dates from the 14th century. A fine view is obtained from the Bratsberg Kiev, S. E. of the town, with ruins of a chapel.

**SKIERNIEWICE,** a town of Russian Poland, in the govern­ment of Warsaw, 41 m. by rail S.W. from the city of Warsaw. Pop. (1897) 9846. It was formerly the see of the archbishop of Gnesen, primate of Poland. Here is an imperial castle, in which the emperors of Russia, Austria and Germany met in conference on the 15th-17th of September 1884. Cloth and linen are manufactured.

**SKIMMER,** the English name bestowed by T. Pennant@@1 in 1781 on a North American bird which had already been figured and described by Μ. Catesby (B. *Carolina,* i. pl. 90) as the “ Cut-water,”—as it appears still to be called on some parts of the coast,@@2—remarkable for the unique formation of its bill, in which the maxilla, or so-called upper mandible, is capable of much vertical movement, while the lower mandible, which is considerably the longer of the two, is laterally compressed so as to be as thin as a knife-blade. This bird is the *Rhynchops nigra* of Linnaeus, who, however, united with it what proves to be an allied species from India that, having been indicated many years before by Petiver *(Gazoph, naturae,* tab. 76, fig. 2), on the authority of Buckley, was only technically named and described in 1838 by W. Swainson *(Anim. Menageries,* p. 360) as *R. albicollis.* A third species, *R. flavirostris,* inhabits Africa; and examples from South America, though by many writers regarded as identical with *R, nigra,* are considered by Howard Saunders *(Proc, Zool. Society,* 1882, p. 522) to form a fourth, the *R, melanura,* of Swainson *(ut supra,* p. 340). All these

@@@1 "I call it *Skimmer,* from the manner of its collecting its food with the lower mandible, as it flies along the surface of the water ” *(Gen. of Birds,* p. 52).

@@@2 Other English names applied to it in America are “ Razorbill,” "Scissorbill, and “ Shearwater.”