

ever since November 1st, and our friends inform us that it will remain until May next.

As soon as a child is able to walk without the aid of his mamma, he is taught to use skates and skis (snow shoes) and so he continues, never losing his interest in these sports until his form is bent with years and his hair grows gray of old age.

Last Monday, February 15th, was what is known as "Holmenkollen," a day set apart each year for the best ski-runners of the country to meet and compete for prizes and championship.

The morning of the above mentioned day dawned clear and bright, yet cold; the thermometer registering nineteen degrees below. At 8 o'clock a. m. while it was yet dark, a constant stream of people could be seen winding their way towards Holmenkollen, large, and small, old and young; some upon their "skis" some in sleighs and others hoofing it. As the common expression "any way to get there." At 12:30 over 30,000 people were assembled at the foot and upon the side of the hill, where the contest was to take place.

In standing upon the summit of Mount Holmenkol and gazing about one can but exclaim, "How beautiful are the works of nature's God." Upon the north, east and west, the eye is met by series of rolling hills, everywhere bedecked with the original Norway pine, and spruce. To the south at a distance of five miles, lies the city encircled upon three sides by low hills, beyond the city to the south can be seen the sleepy Christiana "fjord" upon which numerous ships are seen darting to, and fro. Upon the south side of the mount is a track of land thirty yards wide and half mile length with a descent of 75°. This has been cleared of trees for the purpose. About seventy-five yards from the foot of the hill, an embankment of snow has been built to a height of fifteen feet on the upper side of which snow is piled until it forms a flat.

Precisely at 1 o'clock the various military bands upon the grounds united in rendering the Norwegian national air, "Ja Vi els ker dette Landet." The bugle gave the signal and all eyes were cast towards the top of the hill where No. 1 could be seen descending, at first, at a moderate rate, increasing in swiftness until he reached the "flat;" here he made a desparate leap over thirty-five feet into the air, reaching the ground about one hundred feet from the starting point. The bugle sounded again and No. 2 followed; then No. 3 and so on until each of the 27 competitors had, had two chances of trying his skill.

The greatest jump, without falling, was made by Mr. Cato Aall, 105½ feet. Mr. Charles Larson jumped 108½ feet, but fell. The ones who were fortunate in making the leap and remaining upon their feet would run with the speed of a bird and upon the flat below, where amid the cheers and applause of the spectators would cut a half circle with his "skis" and thus enable himself to stop short just in front of the crowd.

The other poor fellows not only missed the applauses of the people, but received a good shaking up as well.

The rapid speed that they were going at rendered their fall, not of the lightest kind. Many would turn summersets in the air, striking the ground here and there, only to bounce into the air again and continue rolling until they reached the foot of the hill.

Among the competitors were two Lap-landers who showed remarkable courage in the daringness of their jumps, but were not so well scienced as the other boys; consequently they were among the fallers.

The health of the Elders laboring in Norway is excellent, none complaining. Mail addressed to Osterhansgaden 27 Christiania, will reach any of us.

N. C. NIELSON.

### THE LONE STAR STATE.

Texas to the average "Utonian" generally implies a cowboy with his broncho mustang pony, his saddle, his lariat and his spurs, long haired cattle, a great scope of uninhabited country, and a few Texan citizens in keeping with the surroundings.

But while Texas, once the home of the savage Indian, the buffalo and wild horse, and the feeding ground for wild Texan steers, was a vast and beautiful country, dominated by the Mexicans, today it is the home of 3,000,000, free, intelligent, and enterprising people. The state abounds in magnificent natural resources and advantages, is about 800 by 1,000 miles in the extreme measurements, has millions of acres of fertile soil, and is a little world in itself. With the cold winds of Kansas on the north, the invigorating atmosphere of the foot hills of the Rockies on the west, the great forests of Arkansas and Louisiana on the east and valuable deep water harbors in the Gulf of Mexico, on the southwest the four climates of such localities are represented, and you can get almost anything you want. This is Texas the highly prized inheritance of a refined and cultured people.

When the Texans established their independence they maintained their identity, and when the new power knocked at the door and asked to come in as one of the sister states in the union, the offer was accepted; her citizens being permitted at the same time to own the public domain within the state. Being the only state so favored, in her pecuniary independence, she stands out today as the "Lone Star."

After riding all day long, seated in the commodious Santa Fe train, through the vast fields and cities and villages we arrived at the capital, Austin, a city of 30,000 inhabitants. It is one of the most beautiful, quiet and home-like cities I ever visited. Climbing to the top of the dome of the capitol building 300 feet high an imposing sight is brought to view. The most remarkable is the vast stone structure from which I was permitted to look, and on which I stood viewing the grandeur of the scenery below. This structure, only surpassed by one in the country dimensions and grandeur, that at Washington cost the people 3,000,000 acres of land. The green grass, and trees out in foliage, greeted my eyes, and were a pleasing feature, after having dropped into the little paradise from the cold bleak winds and snow storms of the north.

San Marcos is small but a beautiful city, situated to some extent on the side hill, and among majestic evergreens of the cedar and the magnolia.

I was remarkably struck with conditions in San Antonio where we got off the train. Like a summer's evening about a pleasure resort, tables were

spread in open air to accommodate those who were hungry, and as we sat down on the bench we looked about and saw sufficient of these tables to accommodate two or three companies of hungry soldiers. We took chilla, the famous Mexican dish, not altogether because we thought we would like it, but for the novelty of the red pepper mixture. The little Spanish girl who waited on us, no doubt thought she had made "a mash," from the pretty way she smiled, as she struck a match, lit a cigarette and turned on her heel to serve us with more bread; for the sauce, by this time was getting pretty warm. There are 60,000 people in San Antonio, the largest city in the commonwealth. I presume all cities have their mementoes.

The San Antonians are not slow in naming theirs, the Alamo—the ruins of the old mission built, first in 1731, were used by Mexican soldiers; and became the fort of the Americans under Travis. Bowie and Crockett, when they became the scene of one of the most heroic and deadly contests known in modern times. The day following the 22nd of February, 1836, Santa Anna displayed the red flag from the tower of the Cathedral of San Fernando, a portion of which now stands in the heart of the city; and when the Texans would not surrender, a siege was waged from that day until the sixth of the next month, when all the surviving Texans were killed, their bodies piled up with fence rails, and burned where St. Joseph's church now stands. While an old red-nosed pioneer of Texas, who earns a little by showing visitors around the old fortress, told us we were standing on ground where a pool of blood about a foot deep had flowed, the spot where those heroes were slain while in defense of their country, feelings of a peculiar character were ours. The only survivor of the Alamo, a Mexican woman now 114 years old, still lives and is able to relate some of those stirring scenes.

The front of the old ruins look quite romantic, its flat and massive walls, naked windows, shrubbery, ferns and moss growing about, lend beauty to the aspect. Its present size is 112 by 72 feet. The walls are solid masonry, four feet thick and twenty-two feet high. They were formerly covered with arched stone work, secured against the storms by a kind of cement plaster.

Near the San Antonio river, about two miles from the city, we visited another of these old Missions, there being four of them within nine miles, ranging in date of erection from 1716 to 1731. Arriving at the gate of the enclosure we were met by a good natured old German who addressed us in his own language, pretending, of course, he couldn't understand our wants when we made it known that we desired to get over the grounds and see the ancient castle. About all we could get out of him was his frequent reference to his own intelligence, which if he possessed any, was so far obscured by that corpulent exterior that it seldom if ever got out, swinging in his hand was a heavy brass key nearly 170 years old, with which he opened the massive front door—one of a pair set in some master carving work. Stepping inside, we found ourselves in a dismal, forsaken old structure; and while we stood viewing what had been a prosperous Mission in days of Mexican domain, the old German said that, directly under our feet we buried four hundred Monks. Besides