

FEATS OF A SMALL GIRL.

LITTLE MELINA CYR FROLICS WITH HEAVY DUMBBELLS.

Childish Pastimes Which Often Awe Her Young Playmates—Marvelous Strength the Heritage of Generations of Paternal Ancestors—Carries an Adult Visitor About in Her Arms as if He Were a Doll—Pretty and Bright in Her Ways.

A female Hercules in a pinafore! It seems a paradox. None the less 'tis true. A 7-year-old girl, who scorns dolls and takes to dumbbells and weight lifting, is an anomaly. But pretty Melina Cyr does just that sort of thing, and in her play furnishes amazement to her playmates and much childish delight to herself.

This child phenomenon, within whose slender frame lies hidden a strength that baffles all effort to solve, is, to all outward appearance, the ordinary child of her years. An oval face, framed in a wealth of yellow hair, big blue eyes, and slender frame of average height—these give no indication of abnormal muscular development. To the view Melina is a pretty child and nothing more.

And so the marvelous stories of her prowess caused smiles of incredulity to spread over the faces of doubting listeners.

"She's one of those magnetic freaks, that's what she is," said the wise young man.

"They aint no 7-year-old girl can lift 306 pounds. If dey can I'll quit," added another.

The conversation took place in the office of a down-town theatrical agency, where a representative of THE TRIBUNE had gone to obtain information of the whereabouts of strong man Cyr and his wonder-working daughter.

At the Priest's Home.

The seeker for the marvelous was directed to the French church of St. Louis of Pullman. An hour later he knocked at the good priest's door, and was ushered into the parlor to await the coming of Louis Cyr, who, with his wife and daughter, was the guest of the fathers at the parish house.

In a few moments the door of the room opened, and Mrs. Cyr and Melina entered. The mother was below the average height, and looked to weigh rather less than the 105 pounds she claimed. She greeted her caller pleasantly, and said:

"Louis will be down in a moment. This is little Melina. She doesn't speak much French. She hasn't traveled with us enough yet."

"But," said the astounded visitor, "you don't mean that baby is the girl who does

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MELINA CYR. [Strongest child in the world.]

the lifting? She doesn't look as though she could put a good sized doll to bed. Just here Louis Cyr entered. The man who a few nights before at the Chicago Athletic club raised, without harness, 3,074 pounds of humanity conveniently arranged on a platform, looked more like an overfed giant than the ideal strong man. He is strong, however, and after the visitor had shifted his pencil to his left hand and made a sling for the one the giant had just grasped, genially joined in a conversation.

Explains the Marvel.

"Mr. Cyr, I called to see this little girl, of whom I have heard much. Is it true she can lift over 300 pounds of iron with no artificial aid?"

"O, yes," was the reply. "She can do all we claim for her and more."

"But where does she keep her strength? I can understand how a man weighing 346 pounds, with a chest like an ice bin and arms like Armour's prize hams, could lift anything he took hold of, but that child—how does she do it?"

"The giant laughed and said: 'You don't look very close. See here,' and, lifting the girl's hair, which fell about her shoulders, he showed a width of bone that before was not noticeable.

The girl was one mass of muscle about the upper chest. The questioner saw and wondered. But it was only after seeing her feats of lifting he fully realized he had just witnessed an exhibition of strength without recorded parallel on the face of earth.

Among the special efforts of little Melina may be mentioned lifting a ninety-pound anvil by a ring, through which she passes the middle finger of her right hand. This she holds in steady position long enough to secure a photograph. Another is the raising at arm's length and then lowering to half arm a thirty-three-pound ball.

Feat of the Dyaks.

A final and conclusive test of both her strength and indifference to conventionalities was her grasping her visitor about his knees, lifting him clear of the floor, and carrying him across the room.

An astonished young man sought his chair for breath and seized his hat.

"That'll do for me. What you say 'goes' about the child's strength," he gasped, and little Melina laughed with glee.

The girl evidently has inherited her amazing strength from her father. Her mother is in no sense athletic, but on the father's side the super-strength runs back several generations. Louis Cyr's mother, it is claimed, could lift a barrel of flour from the wagon and carry it to the second floor of her house. And he, at the present time, holds a world's record of 4,300 pounds lifted without harness.

Melina has received no special training, it is said, save such hints and suggestions as her father has given her during the last year. She was born in Montreal in the fall of 1888 and so is not yet three old.

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THE DAILY INTER OCEAN, SATURDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 29, 1896.

CONFIDENT OF HIS STRENGTH. August W. Johnson Wants to Lift with Louis Cyr. August W. Johnson, a claimant for championship honors in the weight-lifting line, has sent to The Inter Ocean the following challenge to Louis Cyr, the strong man, who is now in the city: I hereby challenge Louis Cyr to a contest at the following five lifts for \$500 a side. My money may be found with Conrad Anderson, No. 183 Chicago avenue. Lifting heaviest bar with two hands from floor above head, lifting heaviest bar with right and left hand from shoulder, lifting heaviest bar from floor above head with one swing with right hand, lifting one dumb bell in each hand from ground above head, lifting dumb bell with left arm from ground and above head with slow push from the shoulder, then kneel and swing dumb bell with left hand to the shoulder and above the head. I expect Mr. Cyr to respond to this challenge within the next ten days. AUGUST W. JOHNSON.

THE DAILY INTER OCEAN, SATURDAY MORNING, MARCH 7, 1896.

IS TWO-HORSE POWER

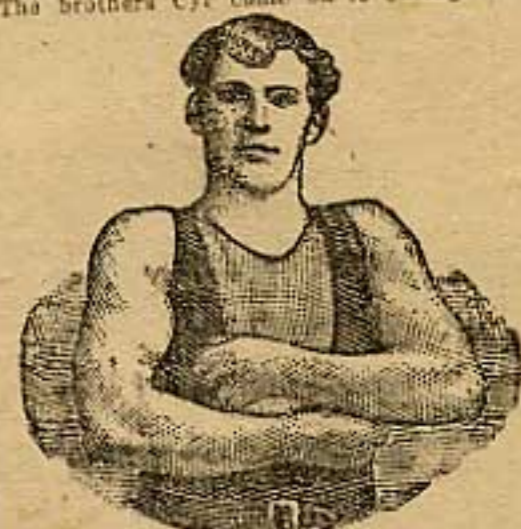
Louis Cyr Pulls Two Steeds Across the Stage.

THEY WORK FOR CHARITY

Brothers Aid Father Brosseau's French Parish Church.

Exhibit in Apollo Hall to a Large Crowd of Parishioners and Admirers.

All the resonant braves at the command of Chicago's resident French were sent up in salvos of applause when Louis Cyr, the champion strong man of the world, last night tilted, with comparative ease, a platform on which fourteen sons of Napoleon, with an aggregate weight of 2,784 pounds, were perched. It was the most extraordinary performance ever witnessed on the West Side, though Cyr, in a private performance before the Chicago Athletic Association, had beaten his feat of last night by nigh on to 1,900 pounds. The brothers Cyr came on to Chicago from



PETER CYR.

Montreal to give a performance for the benefit of Father Brosseau's little French parish in Pullman, Apollo Hall, on Blue Island avenue, was secured, and there last night before 1,500 of the best French residents that Chicago can boast of the Cyr's gave their exhibition. While Louis is the stronger of the two by long odds, his brother Peter, weighing 200 pounds less than the elder Cyr, is a remarkable man. Peter darts about with 100 and 200 pound dumbbells as though they were feather dusters, and winds up with the feat of lifting 553 1/2 pounds off the floor with the middle finger of his right hand. Peter is a young man weighing 158 pounds, while his behemoth brother tips the beam at 350.

The performance, which began last evening and will conclude with one more chapter tonight, was marked throughout by some astounding feats of main strength. There was little of trickery or cunning. The work was straight throughout, and the weights lifted left the floor without any of the artifices of the theatrical strong man.

Probably the most surprising feat of the evening was that accomplished by Louis Cyr, the final number on the programme. Two heavy black draft horses, from the stables of Durand Bros., were brought on the stage in harness. They were big, handsome brutes, weighing 2,200 pounds each, and were faced in opposite directions. Cyr, with only a cotton-bagging guard to protect his arm against the strain, undertook to hold these two horses, after they had been started off in opposite directions. Whips were used on the steeds, and they began to tug away. Not alone did Cyr hold his ground, but he actually pulled one of the horses off its feet.

"He can beat any man on earth," enthusiastically exclaimed Pierre Falet, "and I will wager all that I ever hope to earn that in fair and square test he has no equal in the world. That man Johnson, who challenged him and then disappeared, had better kept out of the French quarter. He has the chance of getting killed quickly should he come around of getting killed by the brothers Cyr, neither can I lose sight of the substantial aid they are lending our parish."

The little French parish at Pullman is suffering none these days, and with a good attendance tonight Father Brosseau will go to mass tomorrow morning with a light heart and a dissipated mortgage.

"I am not what you might term a devotee of physical culture," said the reverence, "but I cannot help admire the extraordinary strength of the brothers Cyr, neither can I lose sight of the substantial aid they are lending our parish, and the good men produced a waiter filled with the gold that cheers and reclams."

THE SUNDAY INTER OCEAN, MARCH 8, 1896.

ARE NEARLY MATCHED.

Rival Strong Men Agree and Will Sign on Tuesday.

August Johnson and Louis Cyr, the two strong men, whose challenges and counter-challenges have appeared in these columns, met at noon yesterday in the office of Theodore Proulx. A three hours' session resulted in an agreement, which will be clinched by the signing of articles at 3 o'clock Tuesday. The match will be for \$1,000 a side.

Each man has submitted six tests, and from the combined twelve the winner must successfully execute enough to give him a victory. The men will come together some time in April at a place yet to be decided.

The following are the tests submitted:

- AUGUST W. JOHNSON. 1. Lifting heaviest barbell with two (2) hands from floor above head at arm's length. 2. Lifting heaviest barbell or shortbell, right and left hand, jerked from shoulder. 3. Lifting heaviest bar or short bell from floor above head with one swing from the ground with one hand. 4. Lifting one (1) dumbbell in each hand from ground above head, both hands at the same time. 5. Lifting dumbbell in each hand from the ground and above head with slow push from the shoulder, then pick up from the ground a dumbbell with right hand to arm's length above head. 6. Heaviest back lift with or without harness.

LOUIS CYR. 1. Holding out straight from the shoulder the heaviest dumbbell. 2. Lifting the heaviest dumbbell from the floor with both hands, then with one hand without artificial aid. 3. Lifting with both hands from the floor the heaviest barbell at arm's length above head with slow push from shoulder. 4. Lifting two (2) dumbbells, one (1) in each hand, above head from the shoulder with steady push, both bells at the same time. 5. Put up with right hand the heaviest dumbbell with steady push, while at the same time putting straight out at right angle from the body the heaviest dumbbell. 6. Heaviest back lift with or without harness.

Johnson is about half the size of Cyr. He is not deterred by a question of size and argues that his absence of fat requires him to lift less weight than his competitor.

INDOOR GAMES AT YALE

Handwritten signature: Johnson



STRONG MEN ARRANGE A MATCH.
Johnson and Cyr Will Contest for a Big Stake and Championship.
 August W. Johnson and Louis Cyr, the strong men, were matched yesterday to engage in a contest of strength for \$1,000 a side, and the championship. The event, the first bona fide one of its kind held in Chicago, will take place the early part of April. The contestants have named the following list of feats:
 August W. Johnson:
 Lifting heaviest barbell with two hands from floor above head at arms' length.
 Lifting heaviest barbell or short bell right and left hand jerked from shoulder.
 Lifting heaviest bar or short bell from floor above head with one swing from the ground with one hand.
 Lifting one dumbbell in each hand from ground above head, both hands at the same time.
 Lifting dumbbell in each hand from the ground and above head with slow push from the shoulder then pick up from the ground a dumbbell with right hand to arm's length above head.
 Heaviest back lift with or without harness.
 Louis Cyr's:
 Holding straight from the shoulder the heaviest dumbbell.
 Lifting the heaviest dumbbell from the floor with both hands, then with one hand without artificial aid.
 Lifting with both hands from the floor the heaviest barbell at arms' length above head with slow push from shoulder.
 Lifting two dumbbells, one in each hand, above head from shoulder with steady push, both bells at the same time.
 Put up with right hand the heaviest dumbbell with steady push while at the same time putting straight out at right angle from the body the heaviest back lift with or without harness.

DANDO WINS THE PIGEON SHOOT.

MAY ARRANGE A MATCH TODAY.

Strong Men Johnson and Cyr Will Meet and Talk It Over.

August W. Johnson, now filling an engagement at the Criterion Theater, disputes Louis Cyr's claim to the distinction of heavy-weight lifter of the world. Each of these men have challenged the other to a contest, and they will meet at noon today at the office of Theodore Proulx, No. 87 Washington street, to get together, if possible, on terms, time, and place, for a championship contest.

Johnson wants to wager \$500 he can lift the heaviest bar from the floor above his head, lift heaviest bar with right and left hand from shoulder, lift heaviest bar from floor above head with one swing of right hand; lift one dumbbell in each hand from ground above head, lift dumbbell with left arm from ground above head with slow push from shoulder, then kneel and swing dumbbell with left hand to the shoulder and above the head.

Cyr, who claims to have been the world's champion heavyweight lifter for the last twelve years, meets Johnson with a counter challenge. He says the feats mentioned by Johnson are some tricks and some honest trials of strength. Cyr has \$1,000, or less, to back up his challenge which is to meet Johnson, do the things the latter mentions, and then designate on his own part several tests. The man performing most of the feats elected by both shall be declared the champion and take the stake money.

Theodore Proulx, Cyr's manager, and Conrad Anderson, Johnson's representative, say there is little doubt that a meeting of their men will be agreed upon today.

Cyr, with his wife, daughter and brother appeared last evening at a benefit entertainment for the French Catholic Church of Pullman at Apollo Hall, Blue Island avenue and Twelfth street. A thousand people attended and wildly applauded the muscular exhibition.

Before the entertainment Manager Proulx announced from the stage Cyr's challenge to meet any man on earth in a weight lifting contest. Last evening Cyr weighed 345 pounds.

BUTLER

Johnson

LOUIS CYR IN TOWN.

The Strongest Man in the World Arrives With His Family.

INTERVIEWED BY A DAILY TIMES REPORTER.

A Personification of Physical Force Who Lifts 4300 Pounds.

The strongest man in the world is in Kankakee today.

Louis Cyr, Madame Cyr, their child, Emiliana and Peter Cyr, arrived in this city direct from Chicago, where they have been playing a successful engagement for the last two weeks, on the 10:35 Illinois Central train this morning. At the depot they were met by Father Granger of the St. Rose church and Ludger Drolet, both of whom are acquainted with the athlete and are to an extent responsible for his appearance in this city. Nearly a hundred of the French population of Kankakee stood on the platform



Commercial, where the strong man will stop during his four days' sojourn in this city, an informal levee was held and Louis Cyr and his brother were presented to several prominent people of Kankakee, including representatives of the press.

Louis Cyr, if attired in the picturesque costume of the musketeers of King Louis of France, might pose in the character of Porthos, one of the heroes of Alexander Dumas' famous novel. Not only is he a personification of physical force, but he is a good-looking man, his well-trimmed moustaches and imperial giving him a military air.

While affixing his name to the hotel register, Mr. Cyr, permitted a DAILY TIMES reporter to scan articles of agreement in a contest of strength that will take place between the French Canadian and August W. Johnson at the Central Music hall, Chicago, March 31, for \$1,000 a side. Much interest is manifested in sporting circles regarding this important event.

The reporter followed the big athlete to his room, where Madame Cyr and her daughter had already begun to make themselves at home, and became possessed of a few interesting bits of information without which a history of Louis Cyr would be incomplete.

"Take a chair while I show you some of the notices I have received from the press," said Mr. Cyr, reaching for a bulky scrap book containing hundreds of complimentary articles of himself and family. There were notices from papers in the United States, Canada, England and the continent, all the leading sporting journals being represented. Besides these were numerous medals of handsome design and great value.

"I was born on a farm near St. John, Quebec," continued this modern Sampson. "My father was a man of no more than ordinary strength and weighed 210 pounds. It is from my mother that I derive my strength. She weighed 265 pounds and was very muscular

and awaited the appearance of their countrymen. It was astonishing to hear how many of the French Canadians knew the renowned strong man—that is to say they knew him in a way. This one had seen him in Montreal, another had lived only a short distance from his birth place. Still another had conversed with him upon one occasion and "had found him a nice man to talk to."

Peter Cyr was the first of the company of athletes who stepped from the train this morning. He is a young man of pleasing presence with smooth face and curly hair. There was nothing about his appearance to indicate a man of more than ordinary strength. Louis Cyr followed his brother a few seconds later, his broad shoulders nearly filling the car door he emerged from. There was no mistaking him for other than he appeared to be—a modern Sampson, well nigh capable if necessary of pulling down a house about the ears of latter-day Philistines in imitation of the long-haired giant of biblical fame. Mr. Cyr's face was illuminated by an expression of good nature as he shook hands with Father Granger. He was neatly attired in a blue cheviot suit, bound with black braid, wore a brown mackintosh, reaching to his heels and a high hat. His watch chain was a massive affair, strong enough to have kept the temper of a stout and angry bull dog within bounds.

At the office of the Hotel



day a load of hay weighing something over 2,000 pounds upset. Without assistance I righted it. Our family finally moved to Lovell, Mass., and it was in that city I gave my first exhibition, at the age of 17. I have appeared before the public ever since."

Mr. Cyr here called the attention of the reporter to a clipping from an English newspaper containing an account of his breaking the world's record by elevating 273 1/4 with one hand at Westminster hall, London, in 1892 Sandow's record is 250 pounds

"Who is the stronger, you or Sandou?" inquired the reporter.

"Sandou cannot be induced to enter a lifting contest with me," was the reply. "Richard K. Fox

backs me against the world, for heavy lifting for \$1,000 to \$5,000 a side. I broke the world's record for heavy lifting in Boston, May 27, 1895, by lifting 4300 pounds."

Louis Cyr weighs 345 pounds and is 5 feet 10 1/2 inches in height. He measures 21 1/2 inches around the biceps; 58 1/2 around the chest in its natural stat; 63 3/4 inches inflated; 21 1/2 inches around the neck.

Peter Cyr holds the world's championship among middle weights for heavy lifting, having won the gold belt and medal in a contest in Montreal, August 6, 1894, against six competitors.

Little Emiliana Cyr is a prodigy. She can lift with both hands from the floor 331 pounds, and with one hand 149 pounds. Although somewhat shy in the presence of strangers, the 7 year old athlete, at the request of her father, lifted with the greatest ease the DAILY

XL—NUMBER 85

SHORT AND SWEET

KANKAKEE, ILLINOIS, WEDNESDAY EVENING, MARCH 11, 1896.

TEN CENTS PER COPY

KANKAKEE DAILY TIMES



THE EVENING DEMOCRAT.

KANKAKEE, ILLINOIS, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 1896.

CYR BROS. TONIGHT.

The Giants in strength at the Armory tonight, the champions of the world who begin a series of four entertainments at the city this evening. Their pictures do not deceive them, and they have won the champion belt. It is hoped that the house will be filled every evening, not only because the entertainment is a novel one, but because of the object, the Emergency hospital, for which it is given. There is not a thing in the performance that can offend the most fastidious, and the back in which they were being driven around the city this afternoon, gave way under its load in front of Knecht & Co.'s, breaking in the middle.

The Kankakee Gazette.

KANKAKEE, ILL., THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 1896.

STRONGEST IN THE WORLD.

The Famous Cyr Brothers are Now in Kankakee. Marvelous feats are being performed at the armory every night this week by the world-famous Cyr Brothers, who have been secured by the Emergency hospital committee. Louis Cyr is the world's champion strong man. He lifts 273½ pounds with one hand from the floor to the shoulder and above the head. He shoulders a 314-pound barrel of cement with one hand. He has lifted 4300 pounds on his back, and has pulled against four horses. Peter Cyr performs feats of strength nearly equal to those of his brother. Little Melina Cyr, 7 years of age, is also a marvel, being able to lift 331 pounds from the floor. The Cyr Brothers are giving a large part of the proceeds of their performances to needy Catholic institutions, and it is in behalf of our Emergency hospital that they have been secured. In Chicago, where they have been giving entertainments during the past two weeks, the daily press has accorded them considerable notice.



THE EVENING DEMOCRAT

KANKAKEE, ILLINOIS, FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 1896.

CYR AND JOHNSON MATCH
Strong Men Agree to Have It Out on March 31.
 Louis Cyr and August W. Johnson, the strong men, were formally matched yesterday morning, in the office of Theodore Proulx. The articles signed read as follows:
 This agreement made this 10th day of March, A. D. 1896, between August W. Johnson, party of the first part, and Louis Cyr, party of the second part.
 Witnesseth, That the said party of the first part, August W. Johnson, and the party of the second part, Louis Cyr, each having deposited the sum of one thousand dollars in the hands of Mr. Gabriel Franchere, as a stake, to be contested in feats of strength, herein after described, and the same to be delivered to the declared winner of said contest, upon the following terms:
 It is agreed by and between said parties that the one who shall lift the greatest number of pounds aggregated from all the feats performed in said contest, will be declared the winner.
 It is also further agreed by said parties, that after any of said contestants has attempted to execute any of the above mentioned feats, and should be unable to perform the same after trying three times, he shall not be allowed to attempt to perform the same unless he reduces its weight, then after such reduction he will also not be allowed to attempt to lift it more than three times at each reduction, until he has reached a weight which he is able to lift or feat to perform, except the back lift or harness, but attempts can be made until they strike the center.
 Said parties also agree that six judges will decide said contest, and a referee, three of said judges are to be named by each party. And upon the failure of said judges to agree upon a decision, then the referee hereinafter selected will be called upon to decide, and his decision will be final, unless the judges have already agreed upon the victor, either for each particular feat, or the result of said contest.
 The referee to be selected by agreement of said judges and the parties to this contract, and named only twenty-four (24) hours before said contest.
 Said contest of strength to take place on the 31st day of March, 1896, and the location to be selected by the managers of each party.
 It is further agreed by and between said parties that either of them has the privilege to increase the weight of his opponent or his own, and that they have also the privilege to use their own as well as the other's paraphernalia.
 In witness whereof, said parties have hereunto set their hands and seals this 10th day of March, 1896.
 AUGUST W. JOHNSON,
 LOUIS CYR.
 In the presence of
 THEODORE PROULX,
 CONRAD ANDERSON.

THE CYRS

A Larger Audience Was Present Last Night than at the Opening.

There was quite an increase in the number present at the Armory last night to see the strong men, and quite a large proportion of the audience were ladies. The performance was much on the style of the preceding night, and nearly every feat is one of wonder. Louis Cyr was feeling good last night, and raised the 245 pound dumb bell above his head with his left hand, and raised on his back over 3,000 pounds. As on the preceding night, Melina Cyr, aged 7 years, was a favorite, and her performance brought forth rounds of applause. It is hoped a larger attendance than ever will greet the Sampsons tonight. Turnell's band will furnish the music tonight instead of the college orchestra.

MATINEE.

All should bear in mind that the celebrated Cyr family will give a matinee at the Armory tomorrow afternoon at 2 p. m. This will be a good opportunity for ladies, school children and those from the country to see the champion strong man of the world.
 The Chicago papers this morning announce that all the papers for the contest between Louis Cyr and Mr. Johnson, at Central Music hall Chicago, on the 31st of this month, have been signed, and the contest will surely take place.
 J. Bilado has a team of horses weighing about 3,200, and he expects to have them pull against Louis Cyr during their stay. It was feared the team would be too heavy but the strong man heard of it and said to bring on the team.

