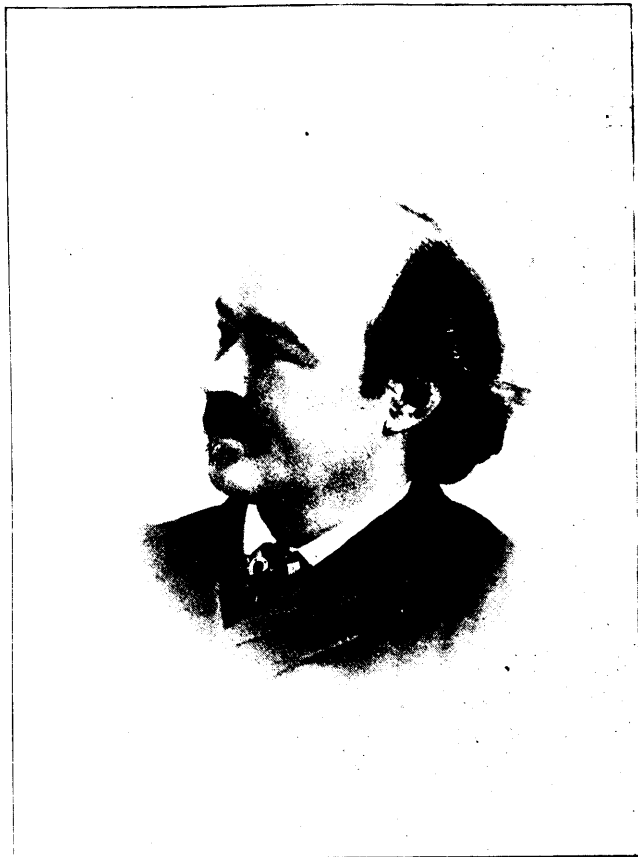




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SPORTS AND PASTIMES

I have had the pleasure of gracing with my ungracious presence the press gallery at Ottawa, when some good-natured pencil pusher smuggled me in, so that I could overlook the bald heads and assembled wisdom of Canada's great men. I have heard Disraeli and Gladstone and a few other minor statesmen in far-off Westminster, and I have listened in Washington to the Demosthenic words of burning eloquence that fell, bespangled with the seeds of hay, from the mouths of the sages from the western states, some of whom wear long boots and some of whom forget to put on their socks. I have pondered over the multitudinous technicalities that one may discover to an alarming extent in our own Mock Parliament. In fact I have attended pretty much every kind of a meeting that a newspaper man will be allowed to attend; but for real, thorough-paced downright enjoyment commend me to a lacrosse convention or a meeting of a senior league. There is more fun in a convention, because there are more people to make it, and, in the words of Private Mulvaney, they can put their feet through the whole ten parliamentary commandments in one short session and then lay their gentle heads on the downy hotel pillow and sleep the sleep of a child. They recognize what great men they are, and they wonder whether there will be a brass band in waiting for them when they reach the sequestered rural spot that they love as home, a place whose principal production is a lacrosse club which sends delegates away on a pleasure trip for voting purposes only. These feelings of course only occur immediately after the convention. When they wake up in the morning, tired from their elocutionary efforts and other things, and reach for the morning papers that were ordered the evening before, they look bluer than the pencil which subdues effusive young reporters. That calm, conscienceless, bad young man has never told the public half what they said (for which the public ought to be profoundly thankful), and then there is not a single "cheer" or "applause" standing up like parenthetical milestones in the highways and byways of their curtailed oratory. They feel mad and disappointed and they evolve solemn swears that the newspapers never did give their town a square show anyhow, that it was to be expected, and all that. But they have had the

honour of representing their club, and a few of the brighter ones have had the fun of seeing that they voted the correct ticket, and that ought to be satisfaction enough for any moderately ambitious gentleman from the back settlements.

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But the above is conventional, and the last assemblage has practically lapsed into the obsolete. It is different

with the Council of Five. There is not so much fun, because there are not so many people to make it; but when five gentlemen lay themselves out to be long-winded humourists a certain amount of success is bound to attend their efforts. It is difficult to imagine that, in a meeting where only five people have anything to say, they could sit and apparently attempt to legislate and still accomplish nothing in more than five hours. Still such is the fact. The rock on which they split was the admission of the Capitals, a question about which something was said in this column last week, and though the negative result arrived at is not the one calculated on, still, there seems no reason to take any different view of the situation. The Capitals were admitted to the senior league by a vote of three to two. That vote was apparent from the opening of the meeting. All five knew exactly what way they were going to vote, but notwithstanding this two long hours were used up in a discussion of a tiresome kind, as if any amount of argument, no matter how convincing, would change the ultimate result. When the Capital delegate was admitted there was an apparent "cinch" in a vote of four to two, and Mr. Devine felt so sure of his ground that he had not been in the room five minutes before he assumed a grandiloquent air. This sensation only lasted about a minute, for, metaphorically speaking, he was brought up with a round turn and "sat upon" by Mr. Garvin, a gentleman who is as dangerous an opponent in a debate as he is on the lacrosse field. Before the admission of the Capitals the Toronto delegate had stated frankly the position of his club in the matter. He refused to be scheduled with the Capitals to play in Ottawa, a statement practically tantamount to resignation from the league. He was hardly taken at his word, for Mr. Hughes, of Cornwall, blandly remarked, "You won't drop out." The tune was changed when the Montreal representative stated his club's intention of doing likewise and there was an uneasy shifting about in chairs as if an acute attack of nervous anxiety had taken hold of the majority. But it was over in a moment and the following action explained better than words that it had never been calculated on that the Montreal and Toronto clubs would dare to bid defiance to a cut and dried decision of one first class and two second class clubs. But that minority held out, and held out to good purpose. The details of the rest of the meeting have been printed



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