

A Sermon on Curling.

The late Rev. Dr. Waterstone, parish minister at Birketonck, was a very exemplary man, and a keen curler. He was, it appears, a character. His wind-up to a discourse on the eve of a great curling match was considered to be the finest piece of pulpit eloquence ever heard in the parish of Birketonck:—

It was a cold day, and there were not many forward—three in the east gallery, four in the west, and about a dozen scattered through the body of the "bit biggin." The weather was cold, and the tramp chorus executed by the feet of all to the last Psalm was perhaps excusable; but they all warmed up when the preacher, after a long pause, said: "Life, ma brethren, is like unto a game at curling. Without a bit rag tae cover our bare bodies, we are sent out into this cauld, frosty atmosphere. But we gather claes as we gang, before we hae to enter on the great, great struggle. And oot we gang, reckless of the frosty friendships we meet, wi' oor besoms and oor carpet bauchels, and oor crampits, and oor cheese an' breid. And as we enter on the slippery treacherous board some of us fa', and ithers again tumble through the thin ice a' the gither; but we help ane anither as best we can, till we come to a place where it can bear us. Then, ma brethren, we get ready oor besoms and sweep the ice clear o' the snaws of mischief and villainy, and lay the rinks for the great bonspiel of existence.

"And for the sake of bringing it hame mair clear tae ye, ma brethren, there is mysol 'skip-pin' the rink of the righteous, wi' John Paterson, our faithfu' elder, ma third haun; William Watson, second; and Peter, the beadle leadin'. And in the rink o' the unrighteous there is Lucifer and his freen' Beelzebub; ma brethren, and chosen representatives in this parish, their helpers and successors, and aibler doovils may be, than themselves—I mean Georgio Johnstone, the flesher, and ma brither Tam, the horse dealer—and Georgie, need I say, skippin'.

"Noo, my brethren, rin doon the devil and his rink as muckle as ye like, but dianna ony o' ye think for a single meenit that they canna play. No, no; there's a' clever—I may say owre clever.

"Noo, we hae curled awa' a while. Sometimes we were up, and sometimes they were up; and whiles, ma brethren, they played strong, and we worked our righteous besoms and soopit them oot a' thegither; and sometimes we played a wee hard, and they carried us through a' ice with their infernal besoms o' corruption. And whiles we were weak and no' owre the hog score, I'm sorry to say, and whiles we were aff. the ice a' thegither. But at times we played cautiously and carefully, and with the richt strength and the richt curl on, sailed through the narrowest of ports, and refusing a' the wiles of the fast-worked besoms of temptation struck hard and fast at the potlid of success.

"But, oh! ma brethren, it has come to the last huid, and the last stane, and oh! It's eair to say, but we are par, and the uprighteous lie the shot. And, oh! if ye but saw hoo it's gairdit, just an inch o' it's cheek bare through the only port. If we played it hard, ma breth-

ren, we would lift our ain nearest stane tae, and it would be as bad as over. Ma brethren, what am I then tae dae?"

"Would ye nae try a bit inwrick on the pillar o' Redemption?" said John, slowly, apparently strongly affected.

"Or a rattle on the gairds," said Peter, who fancied he saw a' the stanes as if they were before him.

"No, it will not do, an inwrick is impossible, and a stramash would do uae guid, for a' oor stanes are ayont the tee. But I'll jist, ma freens, and be ready wi' yer besoms, try and draw canny through the port, lowly and reverently, and wi' the richt curl on." A breathless silence ensued during the time the preacher was supposed to walk down the rink to the crampit. Peter, the beadle, said afterwards he could see at the time the whole thing as if it was before him. Carefully, he said, he saw him lift the stane and wipe the sole of it wi' his cove, adjust the crampit, and elbow oot, put it on the ice like a duck on the water.

At length it was apparent to all that the stone was on its course.

"Let him alace. I'm on him," burst from the pulpit; "it will do it; bonnily it works down owre the hogg, the haunle half turnin' as if tae luk at me. Not a cove, ma freens, not a cove; through the port of the wicked, clear of all guile and wickedness, it catches the face of the unrighteous interloper, and gently movit aside li's shot, and the righteous have, ma brethren, triumphed once more."

There were many head shakings as the book was closed with the familiar thump, and some of them felt a difficulty in keeping themselves from ascending the pulpit stair and giving him a shake of the hand.

An Indian Physician.

The "medicine man" of to-day works more on the faith cure plan and imposes less upon his patient's credulity, inasmuch as he has long since abandoned the practice of extracting ill-shaped bones, beads and all manner of impossible things from the witch-worried invalid. Sometimes he sets out with three or four of his associates to tramp across the Reserve—on miraculous cures intent. They seldom take the roadway, but cut through the heart of the bush, walking slowly and in Indian file. Far through the loneliness of the sparsely settled forest and swamp land, their strange hollow voices float in a weird cry that plays an intonation of two half notes in a high key. Few people even get a glimpse of the odd-looking group going their rounds, each carrying a staff, and wearing the most atrocious masks, painted, chiseled into hideous human features, and fringed with lengths of grey and black hair. On they go, their figures bent forward, almost to a right angle, striking the earth periodically with their staffs, with always that evil call, and a peculiar slight motion of the feet, that is both a dance and a shuffle. By-and-by a woman opens the door of a distant log house; with an inverted broom handle she strikes the door-step a number of times; it is a signal for the "medicine men" to visit the house; there is a sick person there.—From "Indian Medicine Men," by E. Pauline Johnson, in the *Dominion Illustrated Monthly* for April.

Canada.

A correspondent writing to a Brandon paper says: "No thoughtful person can travel this country without being profoundly impressed not only with its vastness, which in itself is positively bewildering, but also with its immense possibilities. Edmonton is nearly 1,000 miles northwest of Winnipeg, but not by any means at or near the outskirts of Canada's fertile lands. Hundreds of miles to the north lies the Peace River and McKenzie basin country, containing 1,200,000 square miles, 25 per cent. of which, according to the findings of a committee of the Dominion Senate, is well adapted to agricultural and ranching purposes; with a climate equal to that of Manitoba, and, in some localities, similar to that of western Ontario. A good sample of wheat was grown this year several hundreds of miles northwest of Edmonton. It was sown on the 15th of April and harvested on the 25th of August. Canadians have reason to be proud of their heritage. Let them prove worthy of it by ever demanding righteous and competent government by cultivating a moral sentiment among the people, and everywhere teaching 'pure and undefiled religion.' Surely as citizens and Christians our opportunities are rare and many, our responsibilities are grave and will tax our principles, our regard and our resources to the very utmost."

Farming Near the North Pole.

Our methods of farming are not strictly in accordance with science. Although we find many valuable hints in the *American Agriculturist*, climatic conditions and local considerations require us to adopt special methods. As to the fertility of our soil and the suitability of the climate for raising all the hardy varieties of grain and vegetables there can be no doubt. In twelve years we have only failed of good crops once, while most of them have been exceptionally heavy. With the most ordinary cultivation, we grow from two to four hundred bushels of potatoes and upwards per acre. The heaviest potato that I have weighed was three and one fourth pounds, and from three pounds of Early Rose seed, I dug six hundred and seventy two pounds of sound potatoes.

Last season I weighed a turnip, that had had only ordinary field culture, without fertilizing, which weighed twenty-two pounds ten ounces. I afterwards picked up four more that brought up the weight with the first one to ninety-three and a half pounds. We have always been obliged to tread out our grain with horses or cattle, and the net results have not been what they would with a good thrasher, yet we have, even in this way, obtained a fair yield per acre. We have had a steam saw and grist mill since 1886, and this year we have a steam thrasher. Before the introduction of machinery, flour was not to be obtained for less than forty or fifty dollars per barrel, and was to be had only in the most limited quantities; now it has become, as elsewhere, a household staple.—E. J. Lawrence, Peace River, Canada, in *American Agriculturist*.

A bill to incorporate the town of Rat Portage has been passed by the Ontario legislative assembly in committee of the whole.