

A SWIMMING CLUB'S HISTORY.

A slight sketch of one of our leading clubs may not be without interest to our readers, and the Montreal Swimming Club certainly deserves the good wishes of all, for it to-day holds a position which is a credit to the City of Montreal and would be a credit to any city. The club was organized in 1876, starting in a very small way, and having for its members only a few young men who were already good swimmers. But the founders had from the beginning, the intention of building up a club which should provide a resort of never failing pleasure for lovers of fresh water, and also teach the rising generation to become proficient in the art of swimming, thereby making them more healthy and stronger, as well as enabling them to become capable of saving their own and others' lives, should such necessity ever occur. With these objects in view a small number of the younger of our citizens founded the Montreal Swimming Club, but could get no help from outsiders, the City Council did nothing to help the movement along, and for a long time the only place procurable for exercise was the old wharf and Island at St. Lambert, and the only concession obtainable from any one was a reduction of fare to one half the ordinary price, by the St. Lambert Steam Ferry Co. Nothing daunted, the promoters held on, increasing their membership slightly from time to time, until by the courtesy and kindness of the Hon. A. P. Caron, now Sir Adolphe P. Caron, Minister of Militia, they obtained a grant from the Government of a portion of the Military reserve on St. Helen's Island, with permission to inclose the same, to build the necessary buildings thereon, and to exclude from the ground all who were not members of the Montreal Swimming Club. From this small beginning the club has grown to its present proportions. It now possesses large dressing sheds with locked cupboards, for members wishing to keep towels, &c. at the bath, a neat office, tool and implement house, refreshment stand, professor's pavillion, &c. with wharves, walks, springboards, &c., and the boats, which are ready at all times to give assistance to any young swimmer who may have ventured too far and become exhausted. There is employed at the bath during the season, a professor, whose duties are to see that no one ventures too far from land, to render any assistance which may be necessary to the members, and to teach beginners how to swim; with a caretaker and porter, who keeps the grounds in order and takes charge of the gate. The bottom of the river in front of the bathing ground is kept covered with sand, several barge loads having been placed there from time to time as the current washes the rocks bare again. The membership numbers at the present time over 1000, and the fee is \$1 for adults and 50c. for boys under eighteen years of age. Annual races are held, and very good time has been made; valuable prizes are given, and diving, fancy swimming and hurdle races are a feature at these meetings.

In the early days of the club all the funds were required for improvements for the bath, &c., and the prizes given were only of trifling value. Some of the old members still pointing with pride to the "brick-a-brac," won by them at that time; but later the citizens of Montreal nobly came forward and offered many valuable prizes for competition. The question of opening a bath for women and girls, has often been discussed in the club, but, so far it has been found impracticable.

An incident which will be remembered by many of the members, occurred when Sir A. P. Caron, paid the members a visit some years ago. The members considered that as he had done so much for them, they should give him a fitting reception, and accordingly on entering the grounds he was met by a procession of over 200 of the members in full dress,—which consisted of a pair of bathing trunks, and was escorted round the bath, this so delighted him that he peeled off his things and took a plunge himself, and proved a very expert swimmer.

The following gentlemen were made life members for important services rendered in the formation of the club, and the placing of same upon a

solid footing:—G. E. Desbarats, M. Desjardins, Alfred B. Guilt, R. Darling, and N. Labranche. "Williams," the famous swimmer who defeated the late Captain Webb, in the Montreal Exhibition races, was at one time Professor of this club. Several hundred persons have been taught to swim in their bath, principally young people, but we might mention an instance of an old man of sixty-five, who, became a good swimmer in one season. Some years ago it was a frequent event to see several members of the committee holding "a meeting" in the water, lying on their backs and floating like so many frogs.

MUSIC.

"Enchanting power, 'tis thine to still
The storms that life's sad circle fill;
The burden of our woes to ease,
And make our pleasures doubly please:
Each tender feeling to refine
Through life, enchanting pow'r, 'tis thine;
Descend, celestial harmony,
Life owes its sweetest charm to thee."

Mr. Charles Harriss's English Ballad and Orchestral Concert, Queen's Hall, May 7th. Vocalists, M'le. Henrietta Beebe, Mrs. Baron Anderson, Mr. Charles H. Thompson, Dr. Carl E. Martin, and Mrs. Story and Mr. L. W. Howard, (their first appearance,) and a full Orchestra. Musical Director, Mr. C. A. E. Harriss.

This "Grand" Concert, with a list of patrons as long as St. Catherine street, was attended by a large and appreciative audience which applauded throughout with no stinted hand. It had the great merit of being concluded in reasonable time, although we cannot but think that two hours is amply sufficient for any concert. As we write, a most delightful one of Thalbergs comes to mind which only lasted one hour and three quarters.

The very name of "Ballad" is so delightful we regret there were so few on the programme. Give any one a book of Ballads, and if they are not perfectly happy, they ought to be. Sing a few of the best to them, and if they are not in bliss, they never deserve to be. As in the days of old when

"Court'd and carress'd,
High plac'd in hall, a welcome guest,
He pour'd, to lord and lady say,
The unpremeditated lay"

the minstrel charmed as much by the tale he told us by the voice and "harp a king had lov'd to hear," so we believe it will be to the end, that no singing can really be worthy of the name unless each word reaches the ear with perfect distinctness. For what is singing but just the most delicious way imaginable of holding sweet converse with you. Words and music "mix for ever with a sweet emotion." Songs without words that reach the ear (a sort of vocal accompaniment) may be very delightful music, we do not doubt it, but all the same we think the addition of the words a decided improvement. Of course the technical difficulties are great, but what are "the triumphs of art" but triumphs over difficulties. 'Tis not enough the voice be sound and clear, 'tis modulation that must charm the ear.' Actors find elocution very difficult. (most horribly ditto) but do we not in our inmost heart long for the speedy execution of any actor who does not speak his "lines" with perfect distinctness.

Much of the otherwise excellent singing on this occasion was sadly marred by the manner in which the words were slurred over. Indeed, without the programme it would frequently have been difficult to know what the song was about. If artists would only remember that although the words are perfectly familiar to them, they are not so to the audience, how soon would there be a blessed change.

As Hamlet says, "Come, some music," and the orchestra is tuning up, and they tuned up to some purpose too, for their playing of the "William Tell" overture was so capital, so spirited, and full of vigor, we almost expected to see the curtain rise, and the splendid opera begin. It was rapturously redemanded, (the overture we mean, not the opera.) The "Grand Orchestral March," by Mr. Harriss will always be welcome, especially when it has the good fortune to be

played in the same masterly manner. The scoring seemed to us to be exceptionally good. The "Massaniello" overture and selections from "Martha," were additional orchestral treats, and we feel sure that all present must have felt much indebted to Mr. Case for the admirable manner in which he availed himself of the resources at his command, and for the thoroughly artistic style in which he discharged the double duties of conductor and leader.

The numerous songs have already been so fully noticed elsewhere, and the merit of the artists so fully given in the "extracts from opinions" in the programme, that we feel it would be an intrusion on our part to prolong this notice farther, but we cannot conclude without naming Miss Beebe's "Kerry Dance," Mr. Thompson's "Waiting," and "Sleep on," and his duet with Dr. Martin "Love and War," as deserving special praise. Mr. Trevors appearance must, we presume, be accepted as a "revelation."

"And the brass will crash,
And the trumpet bray?"

As we entered the Queen's Hall on Friday evening we were presented with a brilliant blue and gold Prospectus of the Baldwin's Concerts, and as an unusual musical treat may confidently be expected we think we cannot do better than give the following extracts from it. We are glad to learn the subscriptions are coming in well and are being taken up by "the upper ten." We shall be greatly disappointed should Mr. Baldwin pass us over from want of sufficient encouragement. It is with no ordinary pleasure we remember Mr. Abercrombie's beautiful tenor in the services at the Chapel Royal, St. James.

"Unless a sufficient number of subscribers be obtained to guarantee me against a prospective season of limited interest of support on the part of the leading citizens, I shall most certainly be forced to omit Montreal from my first season's tour of Popular Orchestral Concerts.

J. THOMAS BALDWIN."

THREE POPULAR ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS,

June 1, 2 and 3,

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

F. THOMAS BALDWIN AND

HERR RUDOLPH KING, Accompanist.

By the Boston Popular Orchestra. (25 Artists).

Baldwin's Boston Cadet Band, (formerly Gilmore's, 30 Artists).

The Bernhard Listemann Sextette Club,

The eminent Vocalists Knowles, McLain, Saxon,

The English Tenor Royal,

Mr. Charles Abercrombie.

The chief classical numbers of the programme, and some of the vocal accompaniments, will be by the famous

BERNHARD LISTEMANN SEXTETTE CLUB.

Acknowledged to be the finest combination of instrumental soloists in America.

WANTED.

A good second hand Rice Lake or Peterboro CANOE. Address reply with particulars to W. L. M., P. O. Box 77, or to the office of the CANADIAN ATHLETIC NEWS, Montreal.

Montreal Veterinary College.

Established 1866.

CLASSES OPEN 4th OCTOBER.

Prospectus sent on application to

D. McEACHRAN, F.R.C.V.S.

Principal,

6 Union Avenue, Montreal.