

THE CANADIAN ATHLETIC NEWS.

Registered.

"Better to hunt in fields for health unbought
Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught.
The wise for cure on exercise depend,
God never made His work for man to mend."

—Dryden.

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Vol. I.

FRIDAY, 14 MAY, 1886.

No. 2.

The annual subscription to the CANADIAN ATHLETIC NEWS, which is published weekly, every Friday, is \$2.50, delivered free.

For sale by newsdealers, 5 cents per copy. Subscriptions, advertisements, and all business correspondence, should be addressed to the MANAGER, CANADIAN ATHLETIC NEWS, P. O. Box 77, MONTREAL, QUE. All other communications should be addressed to the Editor.

WOMAN'S PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

In the known history of the world, there have been three stages in the position of women. In the first, they were considered a sort of cattle, endowed with enough intelligence to make them more useful than the ox or the dog. Any one who doubts this does not need to leave his own country for proof. See an Indian tribe come in after a day's march, and watch the women bundle out of the carts, up with the tents, and gather wood for the fires, all without a word, while the "braves" light their pipe and expend their energy in looting! It may be whispered, indeed, that even among human beings of a lighter complexion the female drudge sometimes accompanies the male loafer. Then there is the second stage in woman's history, which has been pithily called the era of "silence and sewing." Having taken a new departure, in the right direction, that of reverence for woman, man rushed to an extreme. Woman was now an angel, the patron saint of chivalrous doings, and must not soil her fingers by work savouring too much of the earth. She must make music and embroidery; but anything fit for a man to do is *prima facie* unfit for a woman. The effects of this extravagant notion are now seen to have been more than ludicrous, to have been alarmingly serious. Man, being necessarily accustomed to physical exercise, relegates physical exercise to the limbo of the unwomanly. The freedom of lung and limb, so essential to himself, he deems unnecessary

in woman, and so comes to look with indifference on constricted ribs and feet. Instead of pitying the being whose circulation goes painfully on under merely tight clothing, man cultivates admiration even for the hideously small waists and deformed feet produced by corsets, high heels and other instruments of self destruction.

A third stage is now opening: an era in which women are being recognized as neither mere drudges nor mere fireside ornaments,—neither more nor less than human beings. With some difficulty, men have been convinced that women have much the same mental organization as themselves. The same great fact is gradually looming through the fog of prejudice in regard to physical nature as well. It is being discovered—or rather re-discovered,—as it was well enough known while our remote female ancestors were grinding corn and digging fields for their autocratic husbands—that good health is just as surely within the reach of one sex as of the other. A woman's physical nature is as thoroughly capable of carrying its owner safely and happily through life as is that of a man. It will not do for men to blame Providence for the results of their own ignorance!

It is not so very long since gymnastics were a dead art even to the more muscular sex, and even now there is much need to proclaim the necessity of physical exercise for men. So it is not to be wondered at that physical education is only beginning to take its proper place in the upbringing of girls and the preservation of health in women. But the outlook is full of promise. Every now and then we hear of fresh steps taken in the right direction. Two instances occur to us just now. In a large college in

England, near London, "calisthenics" are taught in a fully equipped gymnasium by a competent instructor, as regularly as history and geography in the other class rooms; and the girls—all daughters of ministers, by-the-by—are never more at home than when exercising in their neat athletic costume. And in a Montreal gymnasium we have a capital example of what may be done in this way in our own country. The girls who have gone through a course of instruction from Mr. Barnjum may well be envied by those who have grown up without such advantages. When precautions are taken against over-exercise—precautions equally necessary in both sexes—the value of such instruction is well understood by the medical faculty. In fact, no less than four-fifths of Mr. Barnjum's young lady pupils are sent to him by their family physicians. Comparatively few girls, however, have a calisthenic instructor within reach. These need be at no loss. Rowing, tricycling, horse-riding and tennis are capital exercise for those who can obtain them; while those less easily situated can prove to themselves the grand effect of a good walk, in clothes that are clothes and not fetters,—and may even learn the value of exercise with the homely broom! When medical men, seconded by fathers and mothers, insist on the importance of this question of physical education, it will be a blessed day for Canada!

This is a time of solemn anniversaries for the volunteers. On the 24th of April last year our citizen army received a baptism of blood at Fish Creek. On the 25th, Lieut-Col. Otter's brigade relieved Battleford; on the 2nd of May Cutknife Hill was fought; on the 12th General Middleton captured Batoche; on the 28th, General Strange and Big Bear had their duel on Frenchman's Butte. Looking back, it seems a short time from the first to the last shot of that campaign; it seemed a long time then especially to those who were there!