



CURLING



Particularly in Quebec, Ontario and Nova Scotia.—Article Number Two.

By H. J. P. GOOD.

MY first article was general in character. This I propose shall be more specific. At the same time it must be clearly understood that anything like a history of curling in two comparatively brief articles of some 2,000 words each is a practical impossibility—an impossibility which appears especially striking when it is considered that the Rev. John Kerr, chaplain of the British curlers who visited Canada four or five years ago, took no fewer than 788 pages, comprising something like a quarter of a million words, to tell the story of that one trip.

Wherever clear ice can be obtained or secured curling is likely to be found in Canada. In Ontario affiliated with the Ontario Curling Association there are close upon 100 clubs, representing something like 4,000 members. This number could probably be duplicated by unattached clubs and clubs having their membership in a less general organisation like, for instance, the Western Ontario Colts' Curling League, which takes in 16 or 17 clubs, and of which Major Beattie, the recently elected M.P. for London, and A. F. MacLaren, M.P. for Perth, are honorary presidents. It can thus be fairly said that there are between 6,000 and 7,000 curlers in Ontario. In the Canadian or Quebec branch of the R.C.C.C. there are, according to a most interesting and most ably compiled brochure issued under the auspices of the centenarian Montreal Curling Club, 35 clubs with a membership of 2,207 members. In the Nova Scotia branch, organised 1852 and reorganised 1904, during the visit of the aforementioned British curlers, there are 14 clubs with a probable aggregate membership of 500. Other known clubs in the province will swell the number of curlers to at least 1,000. The Manitoba Association is as rich in clubs as Ontario, having at last reports somewhere around 95; but the total membership is naturally smaller and would not probably exceed an average of 30 to a club, making less than 3,000, which number with the unattached clubs and players could probably be swollen to 4,000. The Alberta Association can boast a dozen clubs with a membership of perhaps 500, a total that could well be swollen by the unattached to 1,000. Saskatchewan drops in with a quarter of a hundred clubs and a membership of 750, which the unattached would bring up to 1,200. The British Columbia Association, of which an old Torontonian in Archie Mackenzie, now of Rossland, is past president and patron, and His Honour P. E. Wilson, of Cranbrook, B.C., president, with A. C. Nelson, of the same place, secretary, has a dozen clubs with a membership of 500; unattached would perhaps add another 300. In New Brunswick there are a dozen known clubs and probably half a dozen unknown with a grand aggregate of 800 members. In Prince Edward Island there are ten or twelve clubs and a membership of 600. Thus we have a noble army of curlers in Canada numbering a good 20,000. Devotees of other pastimes may boast, but it would take them a long time to make such a muster as that of active players, and the beauty of the membership of curling clubs is that there are few or no drones. The call of the game is too strong and the

various executives see to it that all participate in the sport or give a satisfactory accounting of themselves. Thus curling is at once the purest amateur and most social of all games. It has never yet felt the taint of professionalism and the one common prayer is that it never may.

Quebec can claim priority in curling of the provinces by reason of its age, but not by reason of its numerical strength. The celebration of its centennial last year by the Montreal Club brought forth many interesting facts and reminiscences, as such affairs always do. Among other relics published in the brochure before referred to is a facsimile of the first minutes, which commence with this practical if somewhat sing-song verse:

Foot fair, draw to a hair,
Your stone being well directed,
You'll hit your aim and win the game;
If you miss, be not dejected.

While the Montreal club can boast of between 1,100 and 1,200 names, including many most illustrious, but rarely few French-Canadians, if any, on its membership rolls during its existence, originally that same membership was limited to 20, who each and every one under stern penalties had to meet for play every Wednesday between 12 and 3 and for dinner every other Wednesday at 4, to eat "salt beef and greens" at 7s. 6d. per head. And this is about all the "rules and regulations," which are dated Montreal, 22nd January, 1807, call for. Simple enough in all conscience! But curling has prospered in Montreal and to-day there are half a dozen clubs in that city with more or less palatial headquarters, the principal of which are the Montreal, the Thistle, the Caledonia, St. Lawrence and Heathers. Up this way to date, ladies have not affected the roaring game to any great extent, but in the sister province there are ladies' clubs, and good live clubs, too, at Montreal, Quebec and Lachine, and perhaps other places. The Montreal club is very rich in trophies, and so, indeed, are other Quebec clubs, and in fact the entire branch. Corresponding in some measure to the Ontario tankard, and which like it has been played for since the break-away from the Canadian Branch in 1874, is the Quebec Challenge Cup. This cup, however, is played for not on the district system like Ontario's tankard, but in the old style challenge way. It has thus been played for 138 times and won by Ottawa 37 (Ottawa is now the holder); Montreal 30, Quebec 17, Ormstown 16, Arnprior 11, Caledonia (Montreal) 11, Thistle (Montreal) 7, Rideau (Ottawa) 5, Heather (Montreal) 3, Sherbrooke 2, and Pembroke 1. For the purposes of the centennial celebration bonspiel last January, like worthy "brithers" all the Montreal clubs joined together, and the bonspiel attracted some four or five hundred players, about equally divided between irons and granites. The Centenary Cup, played for by irons, was won by the Caledonians of Montreal; the club cup, also irons, by Messrs. W. B. and A. K. Hutchison, of the Heathers; the single-rink iron championship by W. R. J. Hughes of the Caledonians; the club cup for

granites by J. F. Shaw and J. T. Malcolm, St. John, N.B., and the single-rink granite championship by J. Pitblado, Montreal, who thus proved himself even more able with granite than iron, the final in which he beat G. H. Muntz of Toronto by one shot, or by 15 to 14, being a dazzling game. The bonspiel attracted players from all parts of Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces and from New York, Boston, Utica and Newfoundland. The French-Canadian does not affect the game at all, and consequently curling in Quebec province is confined to English-speaking communities, thus greatly limiting its sphere. A ladies' bonspiel is an annual event. The Countess Grey is hon. president of the Montreal ladies' club, Mrs. E. A. Whitehead, hon. president, Mrs. J. G. Dunlop, president, Mrs. Ryde, vice-president, Miss E. Rawlings, secretary, and Miss E. Clay, treasurer.

The most ancient clubs in Ontario, where the game grows in popularity every year, are Fergus, 1834; Flamborough, 1835; Toronto and Milton, 1837; Galt, Guelph and Scarboro, 1838; Paris, 1843; Elora, 1847; Kingston, 1859, and Ottawa, 1862, the last-named being affiliated with the Quebec Association. The Caledonians of this city came into being in 1872, the Granites in 1875, the Prospect Park and Queen City in 1888, Parkdale in 1893, and Lakeview in 1896. Thirty and forty years ago all the playing was done in the open, but there were some grand contests for the Thompson-Scoville medal between Toronto and Buffalo, and the Macpherson cup, played for on the old John Street rink at points by members of the Toronto club, and won, among others, by Tom McGaw, of the Red Jackets, three times, Pat Finnegan, he of the loud laugh, and J. S. Russell, the until recently veteran and highly esteemed secretary of the Ontario Association. The Red Jackets, Tom McGaw, Major Grey, David Walker and Capt. Chas. Perry, skip, were very much to the fore in those days, as were various rinks of four brothers, mainly from Scarboro, including the Gibsons, the Malcolms, the Greens, the Thomsons, the Clarks, the Hoods, and of more recent date the Rennies. Another annual match of superior interest was for the Reid cup, in which the Caledonians respectively of Hamilton and Toronto took part. Then the Don and the Bay resounded with the merry laugh and the joyous voices of the curlers. The era of covered rinks commenced with the erection in 1873 of the rink on Adelaide Street, a little to the west of John Street, under the auspices of the Toronto club, now housed at the Victoria rink on Huron Street. The Caledonian, on Mutual Street, followed, then the Granites on Church Street and later the Victorias on the disappearance of the Adelaide Street rink. Prior to the erection of the last-named there was a rough-covered board rink at Scarboro, but it bore as much resemblance to the handsome social quarters of to-day as a hovel to a palace.

While there are older clubs in Ontario than the Lindsay club, with its 125 members, it is doubtful if there are any which have been more successful, or, thanks largely to the generosity and enthusiasm of the treasurer, Mr. J. D. Flavelle, have travelled more abroad. Having this state of affairs in mind I wrote to Mr. Flavelle, who sending a very kind letter in reply, said he had referred the matter to the secretary, Mr. J. C. Harstone, who most courteously supplied me with the details which follow. The Lindsay Curling Club, organised in 1876, has now on the roll of active members only two players (Mr. Wm. Needler and Mr. J. D. Flavelle) who joined the club at the date of its organisation. The club came first in prominence in the year 1883, when Lindsay rinks won the first prize at the Montreal Ice Carnival. In 1889 the Manitoba Branch of the Royal Caledonian Curling Club inaugurated the annual bonspiel. Mr. Flavelle attended this bonspiel with a rink of Lindsay curlers and though not successful in landing any of the big trophies, he was so impressed with the true sportsman spirit of the western curler that he has been led to make the same trip on ten different occasions since. On his third visit in 1891 he won the International Trophy and the Royal Caledonian Cup. The following season saw him back in Winnipeg and he came home with the Grand Challenge Cup, the "blue ribbon" of the 'spiel. After a rest of seven years, during which time the club had been active in Ontario curling circles, winning the Ontario



Out-door Curling—Though most of Canada's Curling is done in-doors, occasionally matches are held in the open.—This particular picture was taken at Grenadier Pond, Toronto.