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ATHLETIC LAURELS AND HOW WON.

BY SAMUEL M. BAYLIS, MONTREAL.

Man is an animal, and to the degree in which the animal or *life* in him he shares with others of his kind a common nature—hence the desire for strife, contests, and competitive trials of strength and skill first shown, when scarcely able to toddle, in his challenge to run a race of a few yards with a champion no bigger than himself. No truer note in the joyous music of a boy's glad song of life was ever struck than that heard in the shouts of little "Cedric Errol" and his chums, as they tore along the pavement red-stockinged or bare legged and, literally breathlessly, because "pumped," awaited the decision of referee "Hobbs." May the grizzled beard grow greyer, and the bald head smoother, that does not hear a re-echo of these memories from his own youthful experience!

The germ of the modern athletic meeting is latent in just such scenes as these, and further development may be traced in such events as the following reminiscence of personal experience.

The boys of "our block," stimulated into unusual activity by the winning of the coveted pair of snow-shoes always given in the "boys' race" by the senior clubs at their winter snow shoe meets by one of their number, decided upon holding a meeting of their own. A vacant lot of some size near by afforded a convenient "field," and a snow-shoe parade of all hands was ordered to "tramp the track." Accurate measurements were not considered essential; once round the course, while far from being "a mile," according to surveyor's chain, was nevertheless felt to be such by the youthful racers, and the "events" were scheduled on the basis of some such rough and ready calculation. Fathers and brothers were importuned for the necessary articles to form a prize list, and snow shoes, lacrosse-sticks, balls, belts, knives and

marbles were produced in satisfying numbers to afford at least three or four prizes in each event, ensuring to all a reasonable chance of getting something. A lumber yard was assessed for timber for hurdles, and "mile races," "halves," "quarters," "hurdles," and "100 yards" were rattled off before an admiring grand *stand* of parents, friends, and other fellows sisters, the meeting being, by common consent, voted equal to anything yet heard of in that line. Montreal is proverbially an athletic city, and the conduct of public "meetings" by its popular athletic association, and the enthusiasm shown when its petted champions do battle in the mimic war-fare of the lacrosse field, are not to be wondered at when operations are begun so early and conducted so well.

The men of this day, who were the boys of that, have but progressed along the lines they themselves laid down, and, so far as one city is concerned, can point with pride to the results of their efforts in building up the unique organization they have founded and carried on—not by a knot of wealthy sporting-men for the delectation of a few favoured champions, but by a large body of enthusiastic young men for the benefit and enjoyment of all, known to the athletic world, and to many beyond its borders, as the "Montreal Amateur Athletic Association." Its history has been well told by one of its members in the publication, "Athletic Leaves," issued by the association not long ago, of which those interested may, doubtless, obtain a copy on application to the secretary.

Canadian "championships" were, until recently, held under the auspices of this body, but, on the formation of the "Amateur Athletic Association of Canada" by delegates from the various athletic clubs, it relinquished its rights in favour of the new organization, who alone, in Canada, is entitled to hold "championship" meetings,