

OUR NATIONAL GAME:

Lacrosse.

BY A NATIVE.

If any Canadian were now asked, What is the national game of Canada? he would emphatically answer, Lacrosse.

That this game, comparatively unknown until within the past few years, should have become so deservedly popular seems almost a wonder.

If ever any game has been persecuted, abused, or belied by envious rivals, Lacrosse has certainly been that game; and yet, in spite of all the opposition and ridicule it has received from the adherents of older established sports—in spite of its being declared unscientific, and not at all gentlemanly, by those whose notions were rather prudish—this game has, on account of its own intrinsic merits, been adopted by young Canada as the national game of our rising Dominion.

We do not want any lazy game, that requires little or no exertion on the part of those engaged in playing it; and we want no game so scientific that it cannot be participated in or appreciated by the masses of our people; but for our national game we want such a one as we have adopted—one that will teach our youth self-reliance, temperance and sobriety—which will strengthen their muscles, toughen their sinews, and make them every way better fitted to encounter the realities of life.

That this was the original idea of the game, as practised by the Indians, there can be no doubt. Lacrosse was their pastime, their recreation; but it was also their training school for the sterner realities they had to encounter.

If the Olympian games of the Greeks were of service to them in training the youth of their country to feats of manly endurance and skill, so that when the necessity arose for repelling the enemy from their soil, they were found to be equal to the emergency, of how much greater service to the red men was the noble pastime of Lacrosse.

It was not played as a superstitious rite, in honour of or to propitiate any great deity; it embraced none, whatever, of the religious element of the Grecian games, but it was instituted purely as a means of amusement, and as one of the means of quickening and strengthening the body, and of accustoming the young warriors to close combat.

It was emphatically a sport suited to the development of the noble red man; and it is not surprising, as an old writer tells us,