

The Grand Old Roarin' Game.

"To Curl on the Ice does greatly please,
Being a manly Scottish Exercise,
It clears the Brains, Stirs up the
native Heat,
And gives a gallant appetite for meat."

The foregoing lines were penned many years ago by an enthusiastic Curler, Dr. Ruthven, of Scotland. There was here the praise of curling in a nutshell. "Curl," says the doctor, "and throw physic to the dogs." As the date for the eighteenth annual bonspiel of the Manitoba branch of the Royal Caledonian Curling Club approaches, it brings up old memories of games played in the past, matches where the contest was close and exciting and where the better team did not finish second best. The grand old "roarin' game" originated in the Land of Cakes, away back in the fifteenth century.

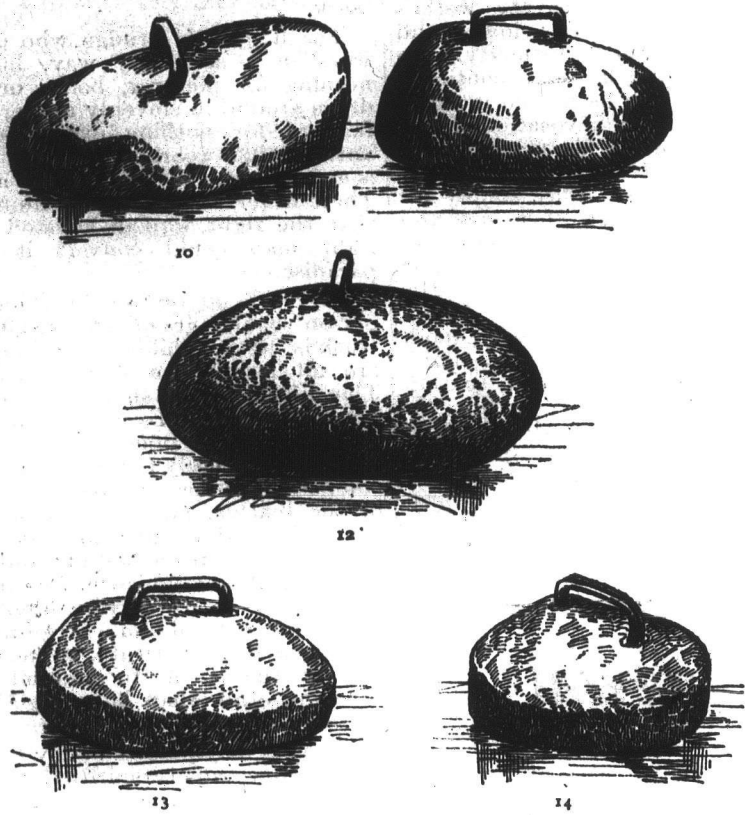
The brawny sons of "Auld Scotia" in those days used "Stanes" of various shapes and sizes when playing the

with the pleasant memories of a closely contested match make winter in this country lose much of its bitterness.

The history of curling in Canada dates back to 1807 when the game was first played on the St. Lawrence River at Montreal.

During the succeeding years the game was played to some extent every winter between local clubs formed in the city at the foot of Mount Royal, the matches being played on the river. In 1821 a number of the sons of "brown heath and shaggy wood," residing in Quebec city formed a curling club and in due time issued a challenge to the club in Montreal to play them a match. The first match played between those two clubs of which any data was kept, was in 1835, the contest taking place at Three Rivers.

As a result of that match, a friendly rivalry resulted, which gave a great



ANCIENT CURLING STONES.

Formerly in the keeping of the Blairgowrie Club; now in the possession of the Delvine Club, Scotland.

- Fig. 10—"The Soo"—Weight 79 lbs.; measures 16x11 inches.
Fig. 11—"The Baron"—Weight 88 lbs.; measures 14x14 inches.
Fig. 12—"The Egg"—Weight 115 lbs.; measures 17x12 inches.
Fig. 13—"The Fluke"—Weight 52 lbs.; measures 12x11 inches.
Fig. 14—"Robbie Dow"—Weight 34 lbs.; measures 9x9 inches.

The stones shown above are the property of the Blairgowrie and Delvine Clubs, and are several centuries old. A metrical account of these and others is found in Mr. Bridic's Centenary Ode of the Blairgowrie Club:—

"In early years the implements were coarse;
Rude, heavy boulders did the duty then,
And each one had its title, as 'The Horse';
And one was 'The Cockit-hat,' and one 'The Hen,'
'The Kirk,' 'The Saddle,' 'President' and 'Soo,'
'The Bannock,' 'Baron,' 'Fluke' and 'Robbie Dow.'"

We are enabled to publish the above historical "Ancient Curling Stones" by courtesy of Mr. J. P. Robertson, Winnipeg.

grand old game. Poets and historians in their writings referred to the game in those early days. "Allan" in his epistle to Robert Yarde of Devonshire wrote:—

Frae northern mountains clad with snaw,
Where whistling winds incessant blaw,
In time now when the Curlint Stone
Slides murmuring o'er the ley plain.

And again he wrote:—

"When Ice and Snaw o'erleads the isle
Wha now will think it worth their
while
To leave their gowsty country bowers,
For the anes blythsome Edinburg's
towers,
And ward frae spleen the langsome
night?
For which they'll now have nae relief,
But sunk at hame, and cleck mischief."

When the curling season is on, the dulness of the winter evenings is forgotten and the happy feasts of good fellowship that follow them coupled

impetus to the game and brought it prominently before the Canadian people as a game that furnished a popular winter pastime.

In the succeeding years curling clubs were formed in various parts of the country, and Canadians began to take an interest and commenced to learn to play the game. Today the game is played in Canada by people of almost all nationalities and it appears to be getting more popular year after year.

The following lines were written by J. Usher, a Scotchman, a couple of centuries ago and they aptly apply now in view of the fact that the descendants of nationalities other than the sons of Scotia now play the game.

He wrote:—
"It boots not whence the curler hails
If curler keen and staunch he be,
Frae Scotland, England, Ireland, Wales,
Or Colonies 'round the Sea;
A social brotherhood are we."

R. D. WAUGH,
President of the Royal Caledonia Curling Club, Winnipeg.

An' after we are deld an' gane,
We'll live in literature an' lair
In annals of the channel—stane."

The foregoing lines tell a whole story regarding the good feeling which usually prevails among curlers. To attempt to write a history of the game in Canada in the limited space here would be futile. We know that after the formation of curling clubs in Montreal then in Quebec City, the curling spread to Ontario. A club was formed in Kingston in 1859; Ottawa in 1862; Belleville in 1857; and Arnprior, 1868. In the exodus of young and old men to Manitoba and the West in 1882 brought among them some of the best curlers in old Ontario, much to the chagrin of many devotees of the game who were left behind. During the hustle and bustle of the early 80's in this Western country the formation of curling clubs was neglected, the strenuous life attendant to the settling of the new country appeared to absorb all one's time. It was not until 1888 that a convention of curlers was called at Winnipeg at which it was decided to form a branch of the R.C.C.C. for Manitoba. Many of those who attended that meeting are still residing in this city and take an active interest in the game. Officers were elected at that meeting, and the Manitoba

branch was duly formed. A resolution was put and carried at the meeting to admit clubs from the North-west Territories. It is not necessary to say here that the friends of the game residing along the foothills of the Rockies took advantage of the opportunity to "get in the game." The game is increasing in popularity year after year, upwards of one hundred clubs are in existence in the West at the present. The annual bonspiel in Winnipeg is one of the big events of the year. Men of wit and men of wealth, men of brawn and men of muscle, men in every walk of life in fact, congre-



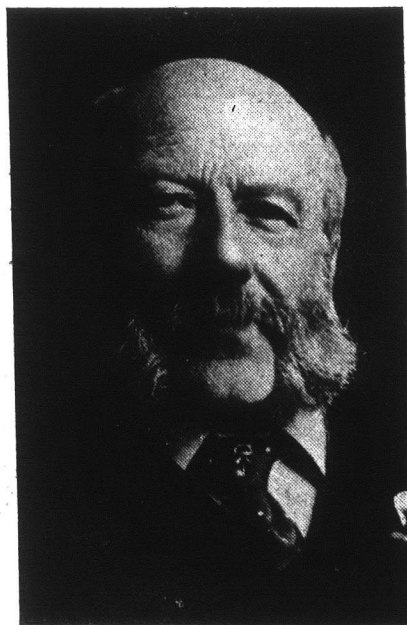
FIG. 9—FROM ARDOCH, SCOTLAND.

Several stones were dug out of a pond on the estate of Mr. Drummond Moray some years ago. The one shown, Fig. 9, is dated 1700, and is lettered "W.H.M." This stone was used in matches over two centuries ago, and is unique in its way, having a three-legged handle inserted in it.—Published by courtesy of Mr. J. P. Robertson.

gate here to compete in the various matches for the many beautiful prizes put up for competition. There is probably no cleaner or more manly game played on earth and woe be he who in the game is detected acting the least bit shady. The grand old game of "Curling" has no greater or more enthusiastic admirer than our old friend Mr. J. P. Robertson, provincial librarian and secretary of the Manitoba branch of the Royal Caledonian Curling Club. He can be well and truly called the father of the "Grand old Roarin' game" in the West.

My Bonny Broomy Kowe.

In summers past I've seen the bloom
On mossy bank and knowe:
I've revell'd mid thy sweet perfume,
My bonny broomy kowe.
I've garlanded thy yellow flowers,
I've lain beneath thy bough:



J. P. ROBERTSON, SECRETARY, R.C.C.C.