

SPORTS AND PASTIMES

For the man who takes any particular interest in outdoor sport now is the winter of his discontent, especially in the neighbourhood of Montreal. The season, which has been a brilliant one in more ways than one, and which practically began its existence on the Queen's Birthday, practically also came to an end on Thanksgiving Day. We are not blessed with the lengthened days of outdoor sport that other more favourite climes can boast of; but we are blessed with the greatest faculty in the world of squeezing a great deal into a small space. We cannot "turn wooden cups to gold, make water wine," or do several other things, but we can appreciate much in little and still not be content.

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In looking over the summer season's work, there is much to be thankful for and some little that might just as well be off the records. Take for instance the national game. From a playing point of view, the season was as brilliant as one could desire; but there have been bickerings and heartburnings and appeals to technicalities which, in the hands of the powers that be, never did anything particular for sport except to make trouble. Under the old N.A.L.A., where the delegates were as accomplished wire-pullers as would do credit to a modern electioneering canvas, strange things and serpentine twistings were simply matters to be looked for, and it became generally recognized that men whom nature fitted for the questionable talent of "lobbying," were the right men to send as delegates. But somehow or other a supposedly unsophisticated public began to open their eyes and resolutely object to be humbugged, even though a defunct millionaire consigned them to the place where lacrosse is played with the proverbial pitchfork, and learned politicians were wont to remark that the "public is a chump." It was at this time, when lacrosse seemed flickering out of existence, that the good idea of playing home and home games between the leading clubs was put into working order. It was a decided improvement on the old régime, and the first season showed how thoroughly any honest effort to provide good lacrosse would be appreciated. That same confiding public flocked in thousands to all the matches, and the gate receipts widened out and spread broad smiles over the faces of those particularly interested in "club welfare," etc. The first agreement was drawn up with the intention of having matches decided honestly on the field, and without reference to the decrees of learned gentlemen who knew rules and quibbles by the nails on the tips of their fingers. For the first year this system worked smoothly, and in the innocence of their hearts they thought their legislation was Medean and Persian. They had forgotten that such a wily old parliamentarian as O'Connell many years ago discovered that there was room for a coach-and-four to be driven through any act of parliament.

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In the second season a change came o'er the spirit of the dream. It gradually dawned on the minds of the managers that to make money—and all our amateur athletic clubs seem to be busily engaged in digging for the root of all evil—it was necessary to have a winning team. There is a good deal of truth in this, even if it is a little inexplicable to the really amateur mind. Granted that a winning team was necessary, the next question was how to get one. Only one club could possibly win what by courtesy is styled the lacrosse championship; but a failure in the field and a default or two might make a good deal of difference, and the championship might depend on a clever stroke of legal work. These measures were not taken exactly and clearly above board, but to any body who follows lacrosse and reads a little between the lines, the ultimate object was clearly perceptible, and not at all creditable to the manipulators. There are two subjects which come particularly under notice—matches postponed by mutual consent and the relative standing of the Cornwall Club with the others on the head of the Leroux case. In the first case the committee succeeded in satisfactorily stultifying itself. That particular meeting will go down in lacrosse records under the heading of invincible ignorance, if not under a more uncomplimentary name. The point was gained and the interests of a club, which was thought inimical to the organizations represented by a majority of votes, were simply left in the cold shades of a helpless minority. This with any thinking person needs no comment. It was simply the "brute force" of a majority. If this majority had represented anything like public sporting feeling it would have been all right; but it did not, and was guided solely by club animosity *alias* gate receipts.

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In the Leroux case the question is slightly different. For a long time all of us have known that a good affidavit maker was an indispensable and invaluable attachment to any well regulated lacrosse club; but few of us suspected that things would go to such lengths as at present seems the case. When the first batch of affidavits were laid before the judges of Canadian amateurism, Leroux seemed to have a very bad case indeed; but when the second lot appeared, Leroux seemed an angel and the pin feathers might be distinguished already sprouting from his shoulder blades.

This position of affairs was a facer for the wisdom of the C.A.A.A., which held council in Montreal last year. They had got beyond their depth, and they appointed a sub-committee. The latter did their business with neatness and despatch and submitted a report according to their lights, which, as I wrote last week, the council proper were afraid to adopt. Whether this was from sheer cowardice of press criticism or simply because they wanted the Toronto end to bear the brunt of any difficulty, is only known to themselves, and their bumps of secretiveness seem to be abnormally developed. But they left the new executive in a pretty box, just the same box as the previous year's executive left the Montrealers in regard to the Ellard case. The new executive in Toronto made little play about the matter; in fact they took it into their heads to run things with a high hand. They neglected to pay any attention to the recommendations of the first sub-committee, and they formed a sub-committee of their own, which reported in a directly contrary fashion to the first body. But at the general meeting there was no quorum, and the next best thing was done, as will be seen from the following resolutions passed:

WHEREAS, some of the members of the executive committee residing at a distance from the place of this meeting are not present; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Leroux has not attended this meeting, although notified to attend; and

WHEREAS, the question before the committee is one of great importance to all concerned; it is

Resolved,—That three copies of the protest, evidence and correspondence, with the report of the majority of the sub-committee and the report of the dissenting member of the sub-committee in the Leroux case be made and submitted by correspondence, as provided in by-laws of the association, with a copy of this resolution, to the members of the executive committee for their decision; and that the copy to the Montreal members of the committee be sent to Mr. Beckett and other members there notified thereof, and the copy for the Ottawa members be sent to Mr. P. D. Ross and the other members there notified thereof, and that each member notify the secretary in writing of his decision within ten days after receiving notice from the secretary of the association of the mailing of the said copies for perusal and decision.

This was not the whole work of the meeting however, as may be judged from the fact that counsel for Leroux filed an appearance, but was given to understand that Leroux and not a lawyer was wanted to appear. Perhaps this is a good idea even if not exactly legal, and maybe the fewer forensic discussions the better for the game. But does it not seem that when what is supposed to be an amateur game gets into this stage of mortification some sort of a safety valve or escape vent should be made. There is no use trying to disguise that at least 25 per cent of the players on the leading lacrosse teams are professionals in everything but the name. We all know it, but it is hard to prove. Why not make a breach in the old method of running things and have professional lacrosse. There is no doubt but that a great many of those who depend for remuneration on the amount of the gate receipts would only be too glad to throw up an uncertainty for a certainty in the shape of a specified salary. There would be an opening then for professionals and no excuse for the contamination of the amateur ranks. This may sound like treason to those who cry "amateurism for ever," and shut their eyes to the fact that there is comparatively little of the genuine article on top. The subject is a long one to go into just now, but more will be said in a later number.

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The Salford Harriers do not seem to be a very happy combination, and their experience at Boston was not the only unpleasant one of the trip. It is true they have added several medals to their already large collection, but from a social point of view they are not particularly successful, and the aristocratic Manhattan Athletic Club are pretty well tired of their bargain. The latest *faux pas* was at the dinner given them by the Schuykill Navy Athletic Club, when the Harriers sat down to dinner in blue flannel shirts, while the rest of the company were clothed with claw hammers and immaculate linen. This was one of the English eccentricities that even the most Anglicized of Philadelphia's gilded youth did not care to imitate.

R. O. X.

HISTORIC CANADA, IV.

Laura Secord.

"Fitzgibbon and the Forty-Ninth!"
Whene'er ye drink that toast
To brave deeds done a grateful land,
Praise Laura Secord most.

MRS. CURZON.

In the illustrations of the historic ground of the Niagara frontier given in our last issue, the grave of a Canadian heroine, Laura Secord, deserves special mention. The story is a brief one, but should be stamped on the memory of every loyal Canadian.

In June, 1813, the American army of invasion, at one time in possession of a large portion of the Niagara district, had been gradually beaten back to a mere strip on the British side of the river, the village of Queenston being within their lines. The American commander, with characteristic energy, determined on making an attempt to surprise a British outpost which guarded a depot of military stores within striking distance. The news of the intended attack reached the ears of James Secord, a merchant of

Queenston, who had been wounded in the battle of the previous October while serving as a volunteer under Brock. He limped home without delay and told his wife. Every patriotic impulse in her noble heart was aroused, and she decided to at once herself undertake that dark and dangerous tramp of twenty miles through the bush to warn the British outpost. At three o'clock on the following morning she arose, and after a hurried breakfast set out on her perilous journey. Our historians of the war have graphically described the difficulties and dangers she encountered. It is sufficient to state here that her mission was entirely successful, resulting not only in the preservation of the British outpost but also in the capture of the entire American detachment, amounting to 542 men, 2 guns and a stand of colours.

The heroine of this episode lived to a great age, long enough to be thanked and rewarded by the heir to the throne for which she did such noble service. She sleeps in the quiet churchyard of Drummondville; and the simple story of her great deed—so vividly told by one of our most gifted writers*—will live long in our annals.

*Mrs. Curzon, in "Laura Secord, the Heroine of 1812." Toronto, 1887.

Fort St. Gabriel.

Fort St. Gabriel, though by no means one of our most important buildings, is or was a fairly good example of the permanence of real good work, however plain and unpretending, if only let alone. *Le Vieux Montreal*, by Messrs. Beaugrand and Morin, gives the date of its erection as 1659, and speaks of it as being a wooden fort—in fact, a stockade.

It formed one of a chain of outposts extending from the city to St. Annes,—the others being Verdun, Cuillier (King's Post Farm), Lachine, Rémy, Rolland, Gentilly, Pointe Claire, and Senneville or Boisbriant, though all of these were built later than 1659. St. Gabriel was established and maintained by the gentlemen of the Seminary, never being granted as a separate fief, hence it was known as the Domaine of St. Gabriel, and the stockade was built mainly for the purpose of protecting the large farm of 400 arpents. It derived its name from the patron saint of its founder, M. l'Abbé Gabriel de Queylus, who also built the year previous Fort Ste. Marie, below the city, from which the "current" is named and which Faillon says was the stronger and more important of the two.

Perhaps it would be as well to quote Faillon's brief notice of its foundation, page 386, vol. 2, as follows:—"Mais un plus grande secours procuré aux travailleurs et au pays par les prêtres de St. Sulpice, des leurs arrivés, fut l'établissement de deux maisons destinées à servir de logement et tout ensemble de défense aux hommes qu'ils employèrent à cultiver les terres situés tout autour. Ces deux terres, Ste. Marie et St. Gabriel, situées aux deux extrémités de cette habitation (Ville Marie) dit M. Dollier, servirent beaucoup à son soutien, à cause du grand nombre d'hommes que ces messieurs avaient en l'un et l'autre de ces deux lieux qui étaient alors comme les frontières de Montréal. Il est vrai qu'il leur en avaient bien coûté sur-tout les deux premières années, les hommes étaient alors rares et les vivres à tres haut prix, mais les années suivantes ils attirèrent de France quantité d'engagés."

At the time of the destruction of the main building, in the summer of 1883, I fortunately applied to the late secretary of the Seminary, Mr. Marler, for information on certain points, and he not only referred me to Faillon's work, but very kindly furnished me with a number of details himself. From him I learned this place was never occupied by a regular garrison, its defence being entrusted entirely to the farm servants. It was not armed with artillery, nor was it ever subjected to a regular siege, though some of the servants were surprised and killed while at work in the fields. Some have thought that the building demolished in 1883 (No. 1) was the "citadelle" mentioned by Faillon, but it seems much more likely to have been the stone barn facing the canal (No. 3) with its massive gateway buttresses, which seem to have been intended as some kind of rudimentary barbicans. When the wooden stockade was replaced by the stone wall of the fort, part of which is still standing, does not seem quite certain, but the present remains are said to date from as far back as 1680.

The fort was situated, according to Mr. Morin, about half way between Ville Marie and the eastern end of Lac à la Loutre, a long, narrow and shallow lake about half as large again (on the old maps) as Ile St. Paul, which we now know as Nun's Island. There was a small stream running from the lake to the river, the course of which is pretty closely followed by the Lachine Canal. Perhaps I should mention that the lake called "à la Loutre" by Mr. Morin, is called Lac St. Pierre by Tessier. He describes the Domaine as extending from l'embouchure de lac St. Pierre ou est le moulin appellé Le Moulin Brullé, jusque au glaciais de Lavois ou est le moulin à eau, appellé Moulin de Laval, le tout appartenant aux Seigneurs."

The building marked No. 1 on the plan faced a little east of south-east, so that when St. Patrick street was opened through, it cut off the northern corner diagonally: its extreme length was 80 feet and, excepting a sort of kitchen wing, was 30 feet deep, and the walls from the ground to the eaves about 15 feet. It had the high pitched roof and massive chimnies so characteristic of our old houses. The walls were about two feet thick throughout, built of rubble stones, and the mortar so hard that it was difficult to make any impression on it with pickaxes. The house consisted of three divisions. The north-west room formed quite a respectable hall—38 feet in length by 26 feet deep, and