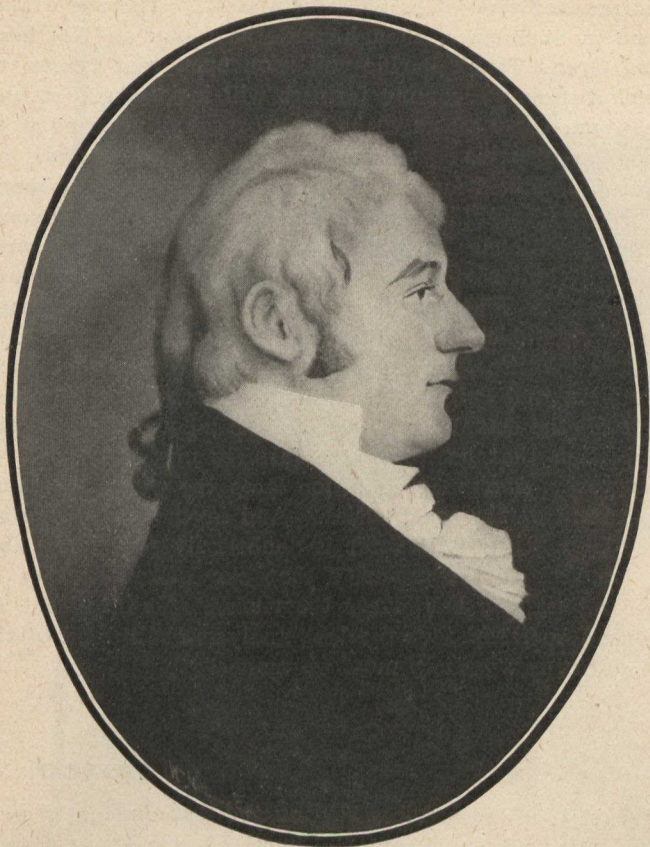




Thomas Blackwood

First President Montreal Curling Club—100 Years Ago.

The Montreal Bonspiel

By "Span."

ONE of the greatest curling bonspiels that ever took place was held in Montreal last week.

There were curlers from all over America, and curlers' wives and daughters, and there was even one curler from the land of the heather, Mark Sanderson, one of the intrepid band who came over from Scotland three years ago to represent the Royal Caledonia Curling Club of Scotland.

There never were so many curlers in Montreal before. They must have numbered at least five hundred, although all of them did not play. There were a hundred and sixty-six granites, and there must have been at least twice that number of irons. And there was a special force of men counted off to look after these, and a special chart in the general Committee room made out like a war map, with pins with big glass heads stuck in it to show where these iron and stones were.

During the week there were at least two hundred and fifty-two matches played on fourteen sheets of ice provided by the five city rinks, and even then the final matches for the Centenary Cup and some point competitions had to be played off the following week.

In these competitions five hundred and four rinks took part, or two thousand and sixteen men—if a man be counted every time he played.

As the matches were played without almost any interruptions during morning, afternoon and evening, it may be imagined how the bonspiel must have interfered with business in Montreal, when it is considered that the best professional and business men in the city are either active or passive members of the Montreal Curling Clubs.

There was one fine feature about the great contest, and that was the smoothness with which everything was run off. During the entire week there was only one protest, and that was on account of a minor breach in the rules, and was acted upon not on account of any accusation made by any of the contestants, but upon information supplied by officers of the Bonspiel.

The dinner given in the dining room of the Windsor

Hotel, which has seen so many historic and wonderful festivities, and may soon be a thing of the past, brought together five hundred knights of the broom and the stones, and men from Newfoundland, the Northwest and the United States fraternised and hobnobbed with each other.

There was open house kept for all the players who visited the various rinks, so that they would not be compelled to go home or to their hotels for luncheon or tea, and in the Montreal Rink there was a sort of a continuous catering performance. No matter how many visited the dining room upstairs there was always a supply for the most hungry or even the most thirsty, and it would be most interesting to know how many pounds of oatcakes and how many sandwiches and other eatables were disposed of in the combined rinks during those six days, and how many gallons of beef tea, and some other drinkables, were consumed.

And all this pleasant trouble was indulged in to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the Montreal Curling Club, a thing which as Mark Sanderson said when he made the presentation of the handsome snuff mull given by the Royal Caledonia Club of Scotland, and made everybody present at the function sneeze like mad, "is rare enough in an ancient country like Scotland, and must be a good deal rarer in a new country like Canada."

Where Stand English Athletes?

"WE do not consider anything that is of interest to the human race unsuitable to our pages," might be the London Spectator's revised translation of the classic saying. Archaeology, politics, apologetics, defence, literature, with a myriad other topics claim the attention of "Our grandmother the Spectator." Just now, solemnly and impressively the chief of English weeklies is discussing the postulated decadence of English athletes. Last year's triumphs of the New Zealand Rugby footballers and this season's victories of the South African pigskin chasers have furnished the text for dignified editorials and heated letters. Nobody has yet been heard to assert that Englishmen of between eighteen and thirty-five have degenerated into a class of soft-muscled, anaemic triflers, but, when two little communities, one with a population of 800,000; the other with not a quarter of a million of whites to draw upon, send to England football teams that make a show of the pick of the two islands, there must be something wrong somewhere. English sporting papers unite in saying



Trophies Given as Prizes for the Montreal Curling Club Centenary Bonspiel. The Centenary Cup and its Four Replicas at the Top.