

Out-Door Sports in Montreal

BY THE EDITOR

A WEEK in Montreal in mid-winter is by no means an unpleasant experience, although the city is seen at its best in summer when the trees of its many squares and parks are in leaf, and when there is activity along the river. But there is a charm about the winter scenes which is unique. In very few places does the Snow King reign so supremely as in Montreal. During January and February "the beautiful" accumulates to such an extent that it is practically impossible to remove it from the streets, and scenes like the one shown in our illustration are not infrequent.

It is cold, of course, but the people see it to enjoy it as there is an exhilaration in the clear snappy weather that is undoubtedly good for the health.

There is probably no city in the world where out-door sports are indulged in during the winter to a greater extent than in Montreal. The young people have a jolly time with skating, snowshoeing, tobogganing, etc., and very likely do not find the season any too long. There are many snowshoe clubs, which provide delightful outings for their members. The Y.M.C.A., for instance, pays special attention to this recreation, when the snow is deep. Fifty or more sturdy young fellows will assemble in Dominion Square, in front of their splendid building, and off they go up the mountain side, for a tramp of about a dozen miles. They do not keep

to the beaten tracks by any means, but frequently strike out over the deep snow, and the harder the going is the better they seem to like it. It is difficult for one who has never tried it to understand what fun there can be in dragging those heavy snowshoes around for a whole evening. The devotees of the sport, however, declare that it is glorious exercise.

Hockey is a popular game in Montreal, and there are several clubs that are regarded as in the first rank. When a big contest is on the fun is fast and furious. The spectator is puzzled to know why one-half of the players at least are not killed or disabled, so rough does the play appear to be. The boys seem to enjoy it though, and serious accidents are not very frequent.

Personally I do not think that hockey is a game to be encouraged except as a pastime among school boys. The element of professionalism enters into the games, and the young men who take part are often subjected to temptations, besides giving too much attention to the sport.

As a healthful exercise, plain skating is an ideal out-door recreation for young folks, if it is not carried to excess, and proper care exercised in regard to companionship. It becomes an evil when several nights a week are taken up to a late hour in this way.

Tobogganing is, however, the sport *par excellence* of Montreal, for in scarcely any other place are there such facilities for enjoying this exhilarating pastime. The mountain side provides a natural toboggan which, with comparatively small expense, has been fitted up with a slide, probably superior to any in the world. The distance is about three quarters of a mile, and the trip is made in about a minute. When half-way down the speed is more than a mile a minute. There are six tracks, side by side, so built that it is practically impossible for the toboggan to get out of the channel provided for it. There is consequently little danger so long as the passenger clings fast to his vehicle. Sometimes six toboggans will start from the summit, side by side, and then ensues a

jolly race to see which load will reach the bottom first. Occasionally they will keep pretty well together during the whole distance, but the one that is heaviest laden usually gets there first.

The Montreal toboggan slide on a clear winter evening is an attractive scene. It is an interesting sight to see the crowds



THE Y. M. C. A. SNOW-SHOE CLUB ON A JAUNT

of young folks, in their bright-colored dresses of red, white and blue, flashing down the slide with merry shouts of glee, and then slowly toiling up the incline for another spin. What the participants probably regard as the "only drawback" is really the best part of the programme, and that is the walk back. This healthful exercise in the outdoors is what brings the roses to the cheeks and tones up the whole system.

Would my young friends believe it? I was offered a ride down the slide, and declined it. The speed seemed to me to be a little too rapid, although the liability to accident is not



THE BOYS ENJOY A SNOW-SHOE TRAMP

great, as the track is straight and great care is exercised not to allow the toboggans to follow one another closely.

The young people seem to enjoy the recreation immensely, although some of them spend too much time in the indulgence. "Just one ride more" is occasionally heard, when the cry should be "Homeward bound." It is like everything else, to get the best out of it moderation should be observed.