

If *she* had but listened, nay, if *she*
Had a soul as true as her form is fair.

Often again I look out on the street
When the glittering lamps are all alight,
Gemming the skirts of the dark-robed night,
When the only sounds that my hearing greet
Are mysterious murmurs the sense that cheat,
Or the wakeful watchman's heavy foot-fall,
Echoing up from the hollow wall,
As he wearily paces his lonely beat.

And then I think of the aching brow
Cooled on the pillow of peace and rest ;
Of lovers the favouring hours have blest
Thinking of kissing and parting now ;
Of happy circles all aglow
With the light of the heart that beams from the eyes ;
Of the anxious student in haste to be wise,
Still pondering the page that bewilders him so.

O poets may sing of streams that flow,
Braiding their ripples in the sun,
Of shadowy wood, and moorland dun,
Of scented brakes where wild-flowers blow ;
Little of these I see or know ;
My home is the city—and day or night,
On its sights and sounds, with a strange delight,
My heart and my fancy feed and grow.

CORRESPONDENCE.

It is distinctly to be borne in mind that we do not by inserting letters convey any opinion favourable to their contents. We open our columns to all without leaning to any ; and thus supply a channel for the publication of opinions of all shades, to be found in no other journal in Canada.

No notice whatever will be taken of anonymous letters, nor can we undertake to return letters that are rejected.

Letters should be brief, and written on one side of the paper only. Those intended for insertion should be addressed to the Editor, 162 St. James Street, Montreal ; those on matters of business to the Manager, at the same address.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN SPECTATOR :

SIR,—You have evidence of the interest in the study of Canadian history which the questions proposed by the late S. J. Lyman through the SPECTATOR have elicited, and you may be justly congratulated and thanked for having exemplified and utilized a power which exists in the Press for the education of the people. It is a new application of an educational engine, which only requires to be intelligently managed to prove of great advantage.

The interest taken in our national game of Lacrosse led me to enquire into its history, and I send you what I have so far gathered. Possibly others may add to this. A gentleman of experience in "Indian history," to whom I applied for information, writes me thus :—

"I first had the pleasure of seeing the game of Lacrosse played at Fort William, on Lake Superior, in the summers of 1820 and 1821, perhaps in both. It was a favourite pastime amongst the "Sautteux"; that is the general French name of the natives in that quarter of the country and around the north shore of Lake Superior, and as far westward as Lake Winnipeg. The Indians themselves style their nation the Ojibweyuk, including the tribes immediately south of the Crees, or Killisthenaux, who are of cognate extraction and speak a language of similar derivation, but differing in dialect. In the time of the North West Company, Fort William, like "La Grande Portage," was a summer rendezvous of the Ojibweyuk. At the time referred to, we had Indian families camped around us coming from their wintering grounds, close to Fond du Lac, others from the Black and Nipigon Bays, and bands from up the Current River towards the Dog Portage, as far as Mille Lacs. These again had connection with the Ojibweyuk of Rainy Lake, where the old Sachem, or Head of the tribes, was wont to hold his court in former times, amidst the united bands, from the Vermilion and Red Lakes to the sources of the Albany River. It may be said, then, that I saw the pure Ojibweyuk at their favourite pastime of Lacrosse.

"I have ever considered the game, as I saw it then played, as peculiar to the Ojibbeway and Cree tribes, and natives from the same stock. I have understood that it was played at Isle à la Crosse, in English River, a part of the north possessed by the great Cree Nation, after they had driven the Chipewyans (quite a different people) back to the Peace River. Lac Isle à la Crosse must have got its name from the first Canadians who passed under Frobisher, having seen the game played there.

"I have never heard of the game being played north of the Crees, nor did I ever see it played on the waters of the Columbia, or at any of the great gatherings of Indians west of the Rocky Mountains. Foot races among men as well as horse racing were the principal and absorbing sports there. The Sohaupues and Kayuses were always occupied with these, as well as the Spokans, Kullspelins and Flatheads, whenever they met together, whether it might be between individuals or in a more extended way between the tribes. The unfriendly terms on which the above-mentioned races were with the numerous Shoshonees or Snake nation prevented any intercourse with them. The latter were kept to their lands on the southern tributaries of the south branch of the Columbia. As for the Indians of the "Prairies" proper—say, the Seious and their various bands, and the Blackfeet, Piegaus, Gros Ventres, &c.,—I cannot speak definitely as to their not having the game among them, for I

know but little about them ; but I have never heard it mentioned in the travels of any one, nor spoken of by those who have sojourned amongst them. And I may say the same of the nations south of the Missouri, the Pawnees, Cheyennes and Recarees, and others. Should it be found that any of these Prairie tribes possess, or ever possessed, the game of Lacrosse, it would still be a difficult matter to prove whether it had originated with them or with the Eastern nations.

"The Crosse used at Fort William by the Ojibbeways was different in shape from the one usually played with here. The stick was of the length of a long walking cane, the wood thinned off at the end until it could be turned to an exact circle, or small hoop slightly larger than the ball. Across this round little hoop were tied two small pieces of whip-cord sufficiently loose to form a bag wherein the ball rested, but not deep enough to allow it to sink far in below the middle, but so as to keep it easy for delivery, or the casting of it. The ball when in the air may be sometimes caught in the hoop, and if on the ground has to be lifted up by the hoop being placed over it and a quick turn of the wrist. The principal difficulty appeared to me to consist in keeping the ball within the cup in running, and the throwing of it straight where required. The crosse had to be held obliquely, high in the air, to keep the ball uppermost by a bend of the wrist. Then in running, at each step the arm had to be moved backward and forward by the action of both shoulder and elbow, so that the ball might not jump out. Even when running alone this was not easily prevented, but when the other lacrosse sticks were rattling about, the possessor of the ball had a most difficult task to keep it. The slightest touch might unship the ball. Every opponent had to be dodged in some mode or other, however marvellous, that being the safest game. In delivering the ball to another from the cup, or throwing it to the goal, it was necessary to discharge it with a jerk or check that it might leave the hoop freely and in the direction wanted.

"You will perceive that with the cup lacrosse, as with the raquette, a great amount of agility is necessary to play the game well ; but in the matter of stopping the ball in the air, or catching it in the cup, as is sometimes done, great exactness of eye and expertness are called for. This and the projecting the ball freely and straight constitute the most skilful play. I had seen much of cricket, foot-ball and hockey, in my day, but I can safely say that I have never witnessed such elasticity and elegant exertion of body and limbs in men as I saw in these pure Ojibbeways at their favourite pastime. As regards the rules or regulations amongst the Indians in playing the game I can say nothing.

"I was quite new to the Indian country, and could not speak the language, and left Fort William for the interior, after my second summer there. Any differences or quarrels over the game I cannot recall. I believe there were none. On such occasions of amusement the Indians met each other for enjoyment, and probably on that account their passions were laid still. Many of them had families, with whom a quarrel at such a time would have been all loss and no gain. Besides, quarrels for them were very serious things, and when they did occur, unhappily, were frequently settled with the gun abroad, or the knife or tomahawk if in the camp. This of course would tend to keep them gentlemen in their light sports, and I must say I do not remember to have seen any rough treatment of each other, or foul play at lacrosse amongst these children of the forest."

From this interesting statement it may be inferred that the game of lacrosse is peculiar to the Ojibbeway or Algonquin and Iroquois Indians (to whom may be added the Hurons). These three tribes occupied that portion of the continent of America extending eastward from the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers to the Atlantic Ocean, and between Lake Winnipeg on the north and about the line of Charleston on the south. The Iroquois and Hurons being in the neighbourhood of Lakes Erie and Ontario, are now represented by their descendants in Canada, to be found in Caughnawaga, and in the village of Two Mountains, and of the Hurons by those who took refuge at Lorette, near Quebec. The Indians of Eastern Canada are Algonquins. The census of 1871 gives a total of 2,300 in the whole of Canada.

Whether this game is of native origin or has been derived from the ancestors of the American Indian cannot be stated. Catlin in his valuable work on the American Indian does not mention the game. It is distinctive from "hockey" and "golf," both Celtic games, and to which it bears some resemblance, inasmuch as the ball is picked up and carried with the crosse. Some one has well remarked that the physical and mental characteristics of a people may be inferred from their games and ballads. In this game, where running, throwing, catching and dodging are developed, it is indicative of a system of life peculiar to a race of hunters and skirmishers as the chase and war required of this people.

Lacrosse is now adopted as the national game of Canada, and is attracting much attention in England and in the United States. I know of no game better suited for out-door exercise, and as likely to prove a means of training for skirmishers acting in concert or independently.

The Canadian youth do not appear to be inferior to their ancestors physically or mentally, and having lately shown more skill with the oar and with the rifle, it will be for them to maintain their national game as one for sport, and not to set an example of "rough play," or of degrading it by the allowance of betting as an accompaniment thereto.

Yours truly,
Montreal, 22nd July, 1879.

Wimbel.

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