

# THE BEST OARSMEN IN AMERICA

## How Canadians Have Corraled This Year's Trophies

By J. T. STIRRETT

THE outstanding feature of the rowing season of 1911 has been the excellence of Canadian oarsmen. They have swept away the principal prizes at all the important regattas, which have been held on this continent, and have made a creditable showing in England.

These are sweeping statements. Are they borne out by the facts?

On July 4th, at the Peoples' Regatta, held at Philadelphia, the Argonaut Rowing Club, of Toronto, won the senior eight-oared race and the senior single sculls. In the latter, E. B. Butler proved his prowess as an oarsman fitted to meet the best scullers on the continent.

The Northwestern International Regatta, held at Duluth, on July 21 and 22, revealed the strength of the Winnipeg Rowing Club, of Winnipeg. At this regatta the oarsmen from the Red River won the senior single sculls, junior and senior double sculls, junior and senior fours, junior and senior eights, and the pair oars from the best crews of the Northwestern States. Winnipeg truly almost wiped the slate clean of all colours but their own, and maintained the traditions which lifted the Stewards' Cup, at Henley last year. The club is in a flourishing condition and its recent successes have attracted many promising members. When Western energy and enthusiasm are applied to an oar, records may well tremble.

The greatest regatta of North America is that held annually by the National Association of Amateur Oarsmen. This year the executive decided that the contests would take place on Saratoga Lake, Saratoga, N.Y., July 28 and 29, or a week in advance of the Royal Canadian Henley. The action of the National Association was strongly disapproved of by Canadian oarsmen because it was a departure from the long established custom of holding the American regatta after Henley. In former years, Canadian crews, if successful at their own National regatta, competed at the American. The change was a hardship for junior crews, because if they entered the American intermediate contests, and were successful, they would be disqualified for the Canadian junior races. Consequently, the success of the Canadian Henley was threatened to some extent by the action of the National Association. All Canadian clubs, save the Argonauts, decided not to enter the American National. The Argonauts determined to train a special eight to row intermediate at Saratoga and to reserve their regular junior eight for Henley. Senior crews were not affected. If the Americans hoped to cut the Canadian training season short by advancing their regatta a couple of weeks, their efforts were in vain. Under the care of Mr. Joseph Wright, their captain and amateur coach, the Argonauts went down to Saratoga with the light of battle in their eyes. They entered six races and won all of them from such crack clubs as the New York Athletics, the Arundels, of Baltimore, the Detroit Boat Club and the Vespers, of Philadelphia. The six victories were: Senior eights, senior fours, senior Association single sculls, senior championship single sculls, quarter mile dash senior single sculls, and intermediate eights. To carry off five senior American championships was a remarkable achievement for a single club. Butler's wonderful performance of winning the three senior single races made all the rowing critics in America gasp with astonishment.

GRATIFYING as were the victories of the Argonauts, they had a bad effect upon the Royal Canadian Henley. Duluth withdrew its entries and the only United States clubs which ventured to face the Canadians were the Detroit Boat Club and the Mutual Rowing Club, of Buffalo. Out of ten Canadian championships, only one crossed the border. This was the junior single sculls, won by D. Regan, of the Mutual Club. Hamilton Rowing Club won the four-oared working boat race, and the Don Rowing Club, of Toronto, won the junior fours. The other seven races, viz., senior, light senior and junior eights, senior fours, senior singles, light-weight junior fours, and junior double, were won by the Argonauts. The last mentioned club has just completed the most successful season in its history. At the Peoples' National and Henley Regattas, its members started in eighteen races and won fifteen, eleven of which were senior events.

As for the English Henley, it is a matter of athletic history how the Ottawa eight beat the Bel-

gians and chased Magdalene College, the winners of the Grand Challenge Cup. Also, their four won the first heat of the Stewards' Cup.

At the end of the season, who are the best crews and scullers in America? One answer is easy to give—Canadians. It is almost as easy to place the Canadians according to merit. The scullers are disposed of immediately by putting Butler at their head. In senior eights, the choice will be between the Argonauts and the Ottawa Henley crews. The Ottawa crew was a trifle faster, perhaps a second, over the Canadian Henley and National courses last year. But they rowed in a sectional eight, while the Argonauts used the old style of shell. This year the Argonauts have a sectional boat. Also they have Geoffrey Taylor at stroke, and other changes in the crew. They broke the senior record of the United States this year and are, in the opinion of their supporters, a much faster and stronger crew than the Ottawa eight, as they rowed last year. But it must be remembered that the Ottawas have improved greatly as a result of their winter's training and English experience. To decide which crew would win before the race is a task which would puzzle the experts, but it would be a contest worth going miles to see. In senior fours, with the possible exception of the Ottawa Henley crew, the Argonauts are fastest. They had also the best light senior, and junior eights. Winnipeg probably had the best junior single and double scullers of the season. It is peculiar to watch the effect that the production of a high-class eight sometimes has on a club. Ottawa is the case in point. Last year they stood

high in American and Canadian honours. This year they had no National entries and their eight and two fours were badly beaten at the Canadian Henley. When the big fellows are being brought to the fine edge of physical perfection the smaller fry get little attention.

The Maritime Provinces Rowing Association, which is affiliated with the C. A. A. O., has not produced many scullers or sweep men of note this year. True, Halifax has still John O'Neill, but John changed his mind about rowing against Butler at the National. He may well afford to do this because the National laurels were his years ago, and he does not need to make a reputation by encountering the coming men.

It is gratifying to learn that an effort will be made this winter to organize new rowing clubs in Montreal. Lachine has always suffered from lack of local competition. The greatest obstacle is the absence of a good course within practice distance of the city, but if the M. A. A. get behind the rowing boom something good may come of it.

What does this superiority of Canadian oarsmen mean? Of what significance is the fact that crews from Winnipeg and Toronto swooped down on the American regattas this season and carried away the principal prizes? Do these successful border raids mean anything? If one visits American and Canadian regattas he will notice certain things which help to answer these questions. In the first place, the American oarsmen are rarely the equal of the Canadian in physique. Secondly, they do not show the same external evidence of careful, sane, scientific training. Thirdly, the American crews are nearly always beaten in the last minute. In other words, "they die in the stretch." Rowing is the most exhausting form of exercise in the world. No other sport requires such qualities of muscle and endurance. Is it true that our northern climate is more suitable for such contests than that which is nearer the "Sunny South?" or, does it breed a more rugged race of men?

## CAMPAIGN STORIES

### A Melodramatic Touch

POLITICAL campaigns sometimes arouse men to do things that they wouldn't do at times when no conflict is raging. A political worker who used to do great service for the Liberals in the campaigns in Ontario, and who hid his baldness by wearing a wig, made several very emphatic statements intended to turn the electors against the Conservative candidate.

A Conservative on the platform was the next to speak.

"Those statements are all false," he said, and, snatching off the Liberal speaker's wig, he added with great emphasis, "They're as false as the gentleman's hair."

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### Heckling

WITH high-sounding sentiments a political orator can catch all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but he can't catch all the people all the time.

Lloydminster, Sask., which is a Barr colony, furnished an example of how an orator's best sentiment may be turned against him. Lloydminster's population is chiefly English, and some of the men there have had the well-known English habit of heckling speakers.

A prominent Conservative orator aroused considerable enthusiasm by rounding out his speech with the oft-quoted statement of Sir John A. Macdonald—"A British subject I was born; a British subject I will die."

Applause greeted the statement, but, when the clapping had ceased, a heckler caused a laugh at the orator's expense by saying, "That's all very well, but what are you going to do in the meantime?"

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### Tried to Trap Laurier

SIR WILFRID LAURIER, the Canadian Premier, is a diplomatist, says the New York Times. At the very end of the last session of the Ottawa Parliament, when every one wanted to know when the dissolution would take place, one of the smartest of the Washington correspondents of the New York newspapers, who was in Canada on the reciprocity question, undertook to make the Premier betray his hand. He called on Sir Wilfrid and began to talk of the beauties of Canada.

"It's the most beautiful place I've ever seen," he

declared. "It's a long way to bring my wife from Washington merely for a day or two, but I'm sure she would like to come up—if it's worth while, Sir Wilfrid."

"I'm sure nothing could be more delightful," replied the statesman, "than for any lady to sit on our beautiful Parliament Hill and see the river below."

"But it's such a long way to come for only a day or two," went on the newspaper man. "If we only knew we should be here a week or ten days, it might be possible. It's pretty hard to be separated from one's wife indefinitely."

Laurier became almost fatherly. He patted the young man on his shoulder and said:

"Ah, yes, my friend. I have always said that it is a very great pity to separate a man and his wife. Good afternoon."

This interview was not telegraphed to New York.

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### Reciprocity Ruses

SEEMINGLY trifling things—such as betting a political worker that he will not vote a certain way—can upset an election. And it is said that innocent-looking things which are being done in the present campaign would have the same effect.

The following two things, for instance, could—in the opinion of the best lawyers—render elections invalid.

In the Lake Erie district a devout churchwoman and enthusiastic Liberal, who is a grain buyer and runs a country elevator, has found a great argument for reciprocity.

"What price do you want for your barley this winter—the American or Canadian?" he asks his customers.

"Are there two prices?" the astonished farmers ask.

"Yes," he answers. "And the American price is twenty cents higher than the Canadian, but the American price goes only to people who vote for reciprocity."

In Quebec, it is reported, some men who buy hay have two contracts—one in case reciprocity carries and the other in case it doesn't. The former is \$3.40 per ton higher than the latter. The duty on hay going into the United States is four dollars per ton, and if reciprocity goes into force these buyers expect that the price for hay will be three dollars and forty cents more than the present Canadian price.