

These weather-beaten trophies that have witnessed so many exciting contests have ever since occupied an honoured place upon the walls of the gymnasium where the Montreal club has its head quarters. Although the Montrealers were successful in winning this trophy, it was not accomplished without many hard-fought matches between them and their old rivals, the Shamrocks of Montreal, who in spite of repeated defeats, seemed always willing to renew a contest which ultimately ended for them in victory. The long-continued rivalry between these clubs, although bitter and often vindictive, was no small factor in securing for Lacrosse the position of the leading field sport in the City of Montreal, a place which it has held undisputed ever since. At this period the clubs of Montreal were far in advance of those of any other city in the Dominion, and the contest for the "Claxton Flags" therefore virtually involved the "Championship of Canada," as well as the possession of the trophy. When these flags were finally awarded to the Montrealers, the contests still continued for the title of "champions of the world." The first match for this title alone was in the fall of 1870 between the Shamrocks and the then holders, the Montrealers, which resulted in a decisive victory for the former. This was but the commencement of a long and almost unbroken series of victories in defence of this coveted title, the effect of which was to make friends and opponents alike come to regard them as invincible, and the name of Shamrock for many years stood in the Lacrosse world as a synonym for unconquerable.

In the meantime, however, the game had taken root in the Province of Ontario. In the year 1867 two clubs were organized in Toronto, and in the Toronto and Ontario clubs of this city, new and dangerous rivals for the coveted title were preparing themselves by means of plenty of hard local encounters, for the task of wresting the Championship from its possessors, and bringing it westward. Although defeated time and again, these clubs kept persistently at their task; in 1875 their efforts were crowned with success, and the Torontos had the honour of defeating the hitherto invincible Shamrocks, and of bringing the championship for the first time to the Queen City of the West. Since then, with the exception