

# THE CANADIAN ATHLETIC NEWS.

Registered.

"Better to hunt in fields for health unbought  
Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught.  
The wise for cure on exercise depend,  
God never made His work for man to mend."

—Dryden.

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Until foul play appears in a match "everybody" admits that Lacrosse is the finest field-game in the world. We can pardon the prejudices of enthusiasts in any sport. We dare say the ancient monarch who accomplished the feat of balancing a feather on his nose, imagined it was a recreation worthy of a king. We are all disposed to over-rate the diversion in which we prefer to indulge; and fortunate it is that all manly out-door sports have their earnest-hearted votaries. But there never was in ancient or modern times, a field sport so fascinating to the ordinary spectator; an out-door game which could draw forth such excitement and applause, as the first-class, square, fair game of Lacrosse. At the same time, there was perhaps never another game in which rough and foul play appears so transparently mean and contemptible; in which fellows at other times incapable of unfairness, lose their heads as well as their manners. It must not be forgotten, however, in judging Lacrosse, that it is only within the last few years that attempts have been made to bring it within the restraint of laws and regulations; and that many of us are not too old to remember the day when it was a wild, wayward savage chase after the ball, a helter-skelter of excited red-skins, in the most exciting of all undisciplined sports.

There are critical croakers who anathematize every out-door game, which demands more constitutional energy than croquet. They do not believe with Henry the Fourth, that manly exercises are the founda-

tion of that elevation of mind which gives one nature ascendancy over another. They rather think that they are the first downward steps to moral ruin, and that a brainless dude, who is afraid to enter a boat, and would as soon stand before a cannon as a cricket ball, is more of the sort of man the Creator intended to occupy the earth than Christopher North. But our croaker forgets that physical force, disciplined animalism counts for a good deal in the make-up of a nation; and that the imperishable characteristics of our British race, which have enabled us to monopolize and manage so much of the world for the world's good, really owe their force more to the physical than the moral. Had we not been the best of animals we could not have been successful colonizers—or missionaries. You can no more take this out of the nature of the race than you can enslave them. We must have hardy, out-door exercises, and none of your namby-pamby foreign frauds either. If the lower-class Englishman is a bit of a brute in his sports, he is a splendid fighter; and he only kicks up a row in his own home, because the nation will not declare war to give scope for his propensity. He puts rough vigour into his sports, his politics. Here in Canada, our climate tones down while it develops this force. We have preserved the national traits which constitute the strength of British character. We have the same hungry heart for flood and field. Yet we have one lesson to learn better than we have learned it. We have brought to Canada every British sport; but we have left behind some of the British spirit of fair-play. Even the British brute is "fair" in his brutality. If it is a costermonger's stand-up fight, a ring will be formed, and the very meanest in the streets will get and

give fair play. The glory of British sports is the surety of fair-play. Defeat is tempered to the beaten, when fair-play has been the guardian.

What is rough-play in Lacrosse? Remember the distinction between rough-play and foul play. We all enjoy the exhilarating rough and tumble in Lacrosse and Football, as long as we know it is fairly meant. But the mean "stabs in the back" one gets from the brute-force player is the height of cowardice. When he cannot beat you by his science, he will try it by his brutality. There isn't a bit of anything British in it. It is made up of Indian treachery and pale-face bad temper. It is the lowest form of athletic contention, on a level with a street dog-fight. An athlete who loses his temper ought to lose his chance of ever again displaying it. One who uses his brute force as the chief expedient in a scientific game governed by laws, ought to set up as a human bull-dog. He hasn't a single quality to commend him to public admiration or club respect. He is constantly on the *qui vive* for offence, and ought to be distinguished by a tail to his belt for his rivals to tread upon. There is know no remedy for such *professional* foul play but a fearless referee, and the public hiss.

Lacrosse was never intended to be played in a parlor, or by milksops. One must give and take some roughness, though there need never be foul play. Canadians love hardy sports. There is no place on the lacrosse field, the toboggan hill or the snow-shoe track for the white feather, or the lily-livered. There is no hippodrome in the pastimes indigenous to the Dominion. But there is always a claim upon a man's good nature, and the bigger and stronger he is, the more gentlemanly he should be. Men who have no pluck or endurance—but this is very