

goes, "beyond a man's duty, yea over and above what is necessary." And yet there is much about curling that deserves and even needs both description and explanation. People often regard the amusement as "unhealthy," because played upon the ice, and as a drinking game because in its literature drams and carouses of a by-gone day are mentioned. But curlers are as a rule healthy and hardy, all the more so in the curling season; nor is there ever, in this country, drinking on the ice.

Then again, we have heard it decried as an old man's game, and one exclusively affected by Scotchmen. These long exploded notions are scarcely longer worth contradicting. Canadians and Americans of youth and middle age at least know better, for they have had a taste of its quality. It is too late in the day to assert that there is a charm in the game. If there were not, we should hardly see, as we do, 600 clubs with 20,000 members in Scotland, 40 clubs in England and Ireland, 100 clubs in Ontario and 50 in the other Canadian provinces, with perhaps 50 to 100 more in the United States, enthusiastic in pursuit of it.

People in the present day have tastes and prejudices in great variety on the subject of recreation. The yachtsman, as he bares his throat to the fresh breeze, feels an expansive contempt for the man who labours on a safety bicycle. And in like manner we have heard adepts at cricket wonder what attraction any one could find in lawn tennis, and deny strenuously that there was anything good in baseball. The quiet, sluggish-blooded whist player, on the other hand, marvels than any person should want to go snow-shoeing; and the genteel billiard player objects to the violent exertion of ten-pins. Happily the variety of our amusements corresponds in some degree to this diversity of temper or physique. But it is distinctive of Canadians, as a rule, that they are fondest of out-door games—a valuable feature of our national disposition. With our clear sky and bracing air it should be a disgrace to blanch indoors when so great a diversity of pleasure awaits us in the open.

Residents of the Dominion have many good reasons for being on friendly terms with winter, that "wide-awake old boy whose bluff sincerity and hearty ways are more wholesome for us than any charms of which his rivals are capable." Therefore we find, as Lowell says, many a good word for winter, not being of those who

take the merely thermometrical view of the frosty season. An appropriate pendant to his essay would be the lines from the Carnival poem of John Reade:

O Winter! if thy anger
Affrights the poor of heart,
Best humoured and most cheery
Of playfellows thou art,
E'en summer cannot rival
Thy many-sided glee.

Thomson, Akenside, Wordsworth, who have all written of winter from the blazing fireside point of view, were none of them curlers, else they would have found something more exteriorly cheerful to say of this delightful season than that it was one of "heavy gloom," "uncomfortable frost," demoralizing cold. Robert Chambers, in a delightful paper on winter well says that the four chief requisites to enable men to endure cold weather are food, clothing, activity and cheerfulness. Two elements out of these four are admirably furnished by the game of curling; for a curler is bound to be active and he is also sure to be cheerful. An uncheery curler is a monstrosity.

Out-door curling on a fine day, with good ice, is, as a health-giving, inspiring, exciting amusement, excelled by no sport of which we have experience. "The air you drink is *frappé*—a purer current mounts to the brain, courses sparkling through it, and rinses it thoroughly of all dejected stuff." One can understand, after he has taken part in such a scene, why it is that Burns, an eminently out-door poet, tells us that "to the lochs the curlers hie wi' glesome speed." That was a hundred years ago. But to the rinks or ponds the curlers hie to-day, no whit less glesome and each no whit less anxious that the sides may not be chosen till he gets there. Merrily the players sweep and scrap the ice of the pond, describe the magic ring around the 'tee,' draw the 'hog scores,' cut the 'hacks' in the ice into which the player shall put his right foot, and after choice of players the game begins.

"Give me a quiet in-turn draw," calls out the skip, placing his broom upon the ice, and the player, balancing his body on the left foot, draws back his curling stone and then slides it along the ice, giving it, by means of a turn of the elbow-joint and wrist towards his body, the circling motion to the right that his captain has desired. But the stone stops short of the "hog score" and is therefore removed from the ice. The opposing lead now plays,