



Preston Curling Club—The two rinks who were runners-up for the Ontario Tankard last season.

a high standard of excellence that its prehistoric founders never dreamt of. There is still, it might be remarked, some variance in the weight of the stanes, for whereas in Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia, where granite is used, they do not usually exceed from 35 to 38 lbs. and the maximum is 44 lbs. in Quebec, where iron forms the instrument of play, the scale runs from 60 to 70 lbs.

Every Canadian who has ever wielded a stone or boosted the iron will agree with the reverend chaplain of the game, Mr. Kerr, to wit, that curling is the healthiest of all sports, giving, as he puts it, "birr and smeddum" to the body at the season of the year when it is most needed. Also that it is the most democratic, for on the ice all are equal, peer and peasant, and it might be added servitor and lord, for did not the most noble the Earl of Dalkeith play third in a memorable bonspiel, to the skipping of his coachman, thus proving that Jack is even better than his master, if he can "guard" or "draw" or "wick or bore" or "inturn" or "out-turn." This state of things, strange to say, is more true of Scotland than of Canada, for whereas ice and air are free to all over there, the palatial surroundings of the game this side of the big sea practically preclude all but the fairly well off or well-to-do from its enjoyment. And I regret to say that it is the tendency of most modern games to make their playing too much of a privilege, thus either clearing the way for professionalism, which means for the few social degradation and for the many physical degeneration by converting them into mere onlookers, or creating not always desirable class distinctions. This is true of golf, lawn tennis, rowing, canoeing, yachting, and, in fact, as I have said, of the majority of games.

Yet it cannot be denied that wherever curling is indulged in it is the game that of all others is the more sociable. It is not alone the livery or the hand-grip that tells, but the merry gatherings that follow the play that bring around heartier and healthier understandings and lay and cement friendships. But a truce to parley. Much more space devoted to disquisition would leave but little for practical story.

There is a slight haze of doubt as to the time when curling was first played in Canada. One of the grand old men of the game, Col. A. A. Stevenson, of Montreal, claims that to his city belongs the honour of initiation—this was in 1807—but sundry Blue Noses, of Halifax, dispute the pretensions of the Commercial Capital and dare avouch that a year or two prior to the seventh of the last century the roaring game was no stranger to New Scotland. However substantial the rival claims may be, Montreal celebrated its centennial pretensions early in the present year by a grand bonspiel, of which more anon, while Halifax has not, so far as I have heard, set any precise date as the beginning of the curl. From the seed sown somewhere at the commencement of this land off-shoots have sprung and spread in all directions until we find branches of the good old Royal Caledonian Curling Club established in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, British Columbia and the Northwest provinces. It is true that this province has since 1892 called itself the Ontario Curling Association, having dropped the "branch" in that year as unworthy of its dignity, but both in method and in matter it remains as of yore and would doubtless scoff any suggestion that it was not loyal to the parent body. If in years it is not the heir-apparent, in numerical strength it certainly is. It was in 1841 that was formed the Royal Caledonian Curling Club, then known as

"Grand" Caledonian, which now has in affiliation 550 clubs in Scotland, 40 in England, 1 in Ireland, 36 in Canada, 2 in Newfoundland, 7 in New Zealand, 1 in Russia, 2 in Switzerland, and 2 in the United States. Some 40 years ago the Canadian branch, with headquarters in Montreal, was established. At that time Ontario was for curling purposes an attachment of Quebec. In 1874 the "iron" domination was felt to be irksome and in November of that year, in response to a petition from 37 clubs of this province, a divorce was granted and Ontario, as a distinct branch of the Royal, undertook the management of its own affairs, Hon. Peter Gow of Guelph becoming the first president and being followed by a galaxy of gentlemen famous in the annals of curling, of the first dozen of whom those only who are living are Mr. J. S. Russell, the oldest Roman of them all, who for 21 years following was the honoured secretary-treasurer, and Mr. J. D. Flavelle, of Lindsay, a stalwart of the stalwarts who has led his rinks oftener to victory and farther abroad than any curler, living or dead, not excluding the famous "Red Jackets" of Toronto, comprising Thomas McGaw, Major Grey, David Walker and Captain Perry, who from 1871 to 1877 won 44 out of 55 matches, tied 2 and lost 9, their aggregate majority being 587, an average of 13 1-2 shots to each victory, and their minority 62, an average of 7 to each loss. On water-covered ice, on one occasion, they made 26 to "love" by their opponents. But of Mr. Flavelle and other Canadian curling celebrities more in the future.

Concerning Flabby Hymns.

IN last week's issue of the "Canadian Courier" there was an editorial paragraph on a recent sermon by Rev. George Jackson, of Sherbourne Street Methodist Church, Toronto, in the course of which the reverend speaker criticised the flabbiness and sentimentalism of certain hymns. A correspondent has written, strongly disagreeing with the clerical critic and ourselves and we take this opportunity of publishing his protest. But our esteemed correspondent makes a mistake if he considers either Mr. Jackson's remarks or our paragraph an attack on Christianity. On the contrary, both the pastor of Sherbourne Street Church and the "Canadian Courier" writer expressed a dislike for the hymns which misrepresent the Christian spirit and which do not properly belong to the Church Militant, preferring the dignified simplicity of Wesleyan poetry to the rubbish of the "Glory" song. We probably agree with our correspondent regarding the ends to be attained but differ as to the means. If the "Glory" song has done good, we are glad to hear of such benefit; but it has also stirred irritation and revolt in those who believe that the best poetry and the highest music are not too good for religious services.

Editor "Canadian Courier":
Toronto.

Dear Sir:—Your reflection re "Flabby Hymns" in your issue of January 4th, 1908, came to my notice, and I am certainly very much surprised that a paper having the good and noble name of the "Canadian Courier" should put such an article before the public. The "Glory" song (which you call a bit of religious ragtime, and which you also state made Toronto nights hideous) has echoed all over the world, and has been the means of leading

many to a nobler and better life; and furthermore, I defy anyone to find anything to be condemned in that hymn. If that "reverend critic" would go into some of these small churches he would be surprised to find that the "rhyming doggerel" "Have courage, my boy, to say no," and the other "syrupy sentimental interrogation," "Shall we gather at the River?" has done more good than he or other of his learned friends could do. I would like the persons who call these hymns "deadly rubbish" and "trash" to go into some of these missions where they are sung and see for themselves how this so-called "rubbish" and "trash" does more good than some of the learned reverends with their smooth sermons. It may be true that people can be reached by such addresses and good singing as Messrs. Torrey and Alexander had about two years ago; but as to being "slang" and "slushy," I fail to see where you or anyone else can class them so, and I defy you or anyone else to find anything which is unchristianlike in those or any other sacred hymns. I believe in fair play. I know the pulpit occasionally indulges in criticism, but it does not do anything to harm or destroy the press or its reputation; furthermore, a paper such as the "Canadian Courier," which every true Canadian should patronise, ought to be a little more careful in its assertions regarding Christians, or the hymns Christians sing. Remember this is a Christian land, and if a magazine such as yours goes against the Church it will turn out a sad failure.

Yours truly,
W. H. RILEY.

Vita Lampada.

SEVERAL of the readers of the "Canadian Courier" have asked for the publication of the poem by Henry Newbolt, of which the late Dr. Drummond was so fond and from which a quotation was engraved upon his coffin-plate. The poem is to be found in the volume "Admirals All."

There's a breathless hush in the close to-night—

Ten to one and the match to win—

A bumping pitch and a blinding light,

An hour to play and the last man in,

And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat—

Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,

But his captain's hand on his shoulder smote—

"Play up, play up! and play the game!"

The sand of the desert is sodden red,

Red with the wreck of the square that broke—

The gatling's jammed and the colonel dead,

And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.

The River of Death has brimmed its banks,

And England's far, and honour a name;

But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks—

"Play up, play up! and play the game!"

This is the word that year by year,

While in her place the school is set,

Every one of her sons must hear

And none that hears it dare forget.

This they all with a joyful mind

Bear through life like a torch in flame,

And falling fling to the host behind—

"Play up, play up! and play the game!"

OUR CAPACITY FOR GOVERNMENT

(Continued from page 9)

before them. The difficulty of getting first-class business men to stand for public office in the larger cities and the difficulty of electing these men when they do stand, makes certain people impatient. They see men who have failed to make a success of their own business and who spend most of their time in bar-rooms, lodge-rooms and places where "the boys" gather—they see these men elected to the highest offices and they grow pessimistic. With such administrators, no broad civic policy can be conceived or carried out. Petty patronage, petty graft and ward politics take the place of civic patriotism and a keen civic vision.

On the other hand, the optimist says the people are being trained and that the people can only learn to govern by governing. He points to the cupidity and relentlessness of capitalistic corporations and says that these high-class individuals are too selfish and too keen to amass private fortunes to allow them to have any greater share in civic affairs than they now have. He maintains that in the long run, the people's good sense will bring them through all their struggles with small financial losses and great ethical gains.

The question is too large to be discussed in one article or even half a dozen. Those interested in municipal government in any sense—and that should comprise all urban voters—should study this volume thoroughly. It will broaden their view and supply them with thought-food for many days to come.