

# LACROSSE

by Ross MacKenzie



**W**HEN, in 1763, the wily Objibway secured possession of Fort Michilimackinac and massacred its British garrison, the game "Bagataway," through the medium of which he accomplished his purpose, was hardly as popular among the English-speaking patrons as its lineal descendant, the Canadian national game, lacrosse, is at the present time. This is the first match we find recorded in history, but from the many points of similarity between lacrosse and the ancient Celtic game, hurley, devotees of the game may be found ardent enough to believe that lacrosse sticks formed part of the furnishings of the Ark.

Antiquity is only suggested here, however, in connection with lacrosse to show to what daring lengths a man will go in singing the praises of his game, and as writers on other field sports generally commence by quoting from black-letter tomes of mediæval ages in which they have found traces of their particular game, it is intended to intimate that lacrosse is without a peer even in the dim and mystic past, as it is in the present age, and as it will be in futurity if the world does not degenerate.

However this may be, up to the year 1860 lacrosse was a game comparatively unknown outside of a few Indian tribes in Canada, notably the Caughnawagas, a portion of the Iroquois nation whose reservation is on the bank of the St. Lawrence River, at the head of the famous Lachine Rapids. On account of the proximity of this village to Montreal, that city was the first to take notice

of the game, and its grand possibilities were quickly recognized.

From a small beginning in Montreal the game of lacrosse has, in the last thirty years, spread to all quarters of the globe. Clubs are now flourishing in Australia and New Zealand. In England and Ireland the game is struggling with football for supremacy. In the United States, New York, Chicago, Baltimore, Boston, numerous other cities and various universities have their clubs, and a championship is competed for annually. Within the last few years it has been introduced into schools in France, and the government has made a grant in order to foster and popularize it.

Canada still retains pre-eminence in the game, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific nearly ever city, town and village turns out a fair percentage of its population as lacrosse players. In the two principal cities, Montreal and Toronto, centers perhaps the best lacrosse talent in the world, although in Cornwall, Ottawa, St. Catherines, Winnipeg, Vancouver, B. C., and New Westminster, B. C., many exponents of the game worthy of place in the first rank may be found.

The National Amateur Lacrosse Association, founded in 1867, has done good work in legislating for the game, and was, up to five years ago, the only organization of the kind in Canada, but the number of clubs increased so fast and the opening up of the Northwest Territories and connection with British Columbia made distances so great, that other associations became necessary. Now the National Association is composed principally of clubs in Eastern Canada. The Canadian Lacrosse Association looks after the interests of clubs in the western portion of the Province of Ontario. Manitoba has an association composed of clubs in the North-

west Territories, and the British Columbian Association takes charge of the Pacific Slope. Each of these associations regulates contests for championships—senior, intermediate, junior and district—and the majority of these are decided by a season's competition on a series basis, a schedule of the matches being arranged before the lacrosse season opens.

Besides keeping track of the various championships and settling club disputes from time to time, the associations' chief duty is stamping out professionalism, that disease fatal to all sport. Lacrosse up to the present time has respected the amateur definition. Outside of the Indians, who are now outclassed by the whites, there are no professional lacrosse-players. There are many black-listed players, thanks to the work of the associations, but these men cannot take part in matches, and when the brand has been put upon them, they become pariahs to the lacrosse fraternity. In addition to these associations a league composed of the five leading clubs and styled the Canadian Lacrosse League, was formed two years ago. The members of this league were the Montreal and Shamrock clubs of Montreal, the Cornwall of Cornwall, Ottawa of Ottawa and Toronto of Toronto. The winner of a series of matches between these clubs, it was conceded by the lacrosse public of Canada, might well be hailed as champion, and they, finding that the associations were occupied in legislating for junior clubs whose interests were always made paramount to theirs, decided to cut loose and legislate for themselves. The move was a good one, and the matches between these clubs were always superb exhibitions of the beauties of the game.

Unfortunately difference of opinion in 1890 caused a split in the league. At its organization, after careful consideration, it was decided to limit the number of clubs to five, as home and home matches between that number would necessitate as much traveling and as many matches as amateurs could stand. The Capital Club of Ottawa, winner of the Intermediate Championship of the National Lacrosse Association in 1889, was anxious to step into senior rank, and during the winter of '90-'91, by assiduous wire-pulling, managed to persuade Cornwall, Ottawa and Shamrock

clubs to agree to receive them into the league, thus violating the agreement.

The Montreal and Toronto clubs refused to vary from the original understanding, and the consequence was disbandment. Cornwall, Ottawa, Shamrock and Capital formed a four-club league on the lines of the old one, and Toronto and Montreal engaged in a series of matches between themselves for a \$200 trophy.

Cornwall secured the League Championship and Montreal won the series with Toronto, and in the fall the two winners met, when Cornwall won. The breach succeeded only in lessening the public interest in matches, and the bone of contention, the Capital Club, did not show itself fit for the company it aspired to. Early in '92 the six clubs met, and it was decided to revert to the five-club league, on condition that the Ottawa and Capital clubs should amalgamate. In the event of their refusal a four-club league was drawn up, dropping both Ottawa clubs. They, however, came into line under the title of "Capital Club of Ottawa," and have put on the field one of the strongest lacrosse aggregations seen in Canada for years. They have suffered but one defeat, that at the hands of the Shamrocks in Montreal, a defeat they wiped out on their own grounds later on, and although the Shamrocks are also a very strong combination, the Capitals are the favorites for this year's championship. Cornwall, so long in the van, is third, and the once mighty Montreal and Toronto are training junior players, and are apparently willing to divide last honors, with odds in favor of Toronto for the tailpiece.

The Canadian Lacrosse Association in Ontario had a very successful season in 1891, the St. Catharines Club coming out on top. This year the St. Catharines Club, through a quarrel with the association, has been blacklisted and has dropped out, leaving the struggle between Stratford, Paris and Niagara Falls, all three strong teams, and destined very probably to be strong opponents of the teams of the big league.

In Manitoba lacrosse has languished, probably on account of the efforts to boom it in British Columbia. An attempt is now being made to have one or more of the Montreal clubs make a trip to Winnipeg and perhaps other points to awaken interest.

In British Columbia in 1891 a lively season was closed, with the New Westminster Club at the top, and this year a twelve-match series is being fought out between Victoria, Vancouver and New Westminster, with the odds in favor of Vancouver. The activity is, however, unfortunately very unhealthy, as in their desire for supremacy they have awakened strong suspicions that the unwonted march of crack lacrosse-players westward is not for the benefit of their health or from a desire to follow the advice of the late Horace Greeley. The clubs on the Pacific coast are making a mistake, one that will not take long to bring its evil consequences, and it is a pity that their directors are so short-sighted as to devote their apparently great energy in a direction which can only result in future harm to our national game.

The idea of giving the British public a practical illustration of the beauties of lacrosse originated in the mind of Dr. Beers of Montreal. It is chiefly owing to the same gentleman that the game is possessed of the qualities that it has, for it was he who, assisted by a few others, took hold of the old Indian game, and by a set of rules and regulations of their compilation made out of it the scientific and picturesque sport that it now is. In 1867, having seen the game established as the national game of Canada, the doctor's ambition went further, and in 1869 he had almost completed arrangements toward taking a team of players over to the mother country, when a speculator who had got wind of his intention scented a probable fortune in the enterprise and forestalled the project by taking over to England two teams selected from Caughnawaga Indians. The exhibitions given by them were poorly patronized, and the speculator was mulcted in a heavy loss. In 1875 Dr. Beers again took up the idea and made a trip over to spy out the land, and as a result the first Canadian lacrosse team composed, with one exception, of members of the Montreal Club, accompanied by a team of Caughnawaga Indians, went over in 1876 and made a tour through the United Kingdom. Commencing at Belfast they played in most of the available towns of note in Ireland, Scotland and England, and wherever they went the left behind them lasting impressions of the beauty of the game,

Clubs sprang up in their wake and the majority of them not only still exist, but have developed others, and lacrosse has taken a firm hold in Great Britain. The crowning event of the trip was a command which the teams received to play before Her Majesty at Windsor Castle, where they were not only kindly received, but were individually presented to the Queen, and each received from the royal hand her photograph and autograph as a souvenir. Financially the members of the team were heavy losers but they were more than compensated for this by the hospitable treatment they received, by the honors bestowed upon them and by the success which attended their efforts to make the game popular in Great Britain. The teams returned to Canada in the fall of 1876, having been absent over two months, and from that time up to the spring of 1883 Dr. Beers worked steadily at the organization of another similar but more extended trip. The result of his labors was the tour of the Canadian Lacrosse Team of 1883. Fifteen players selected from the Montreal and Toronto Lacrosse Clubs, accompanied by thirteen Caughnawaga Indians, sailed from Portland on May 3d, 1883, and returned via Quebec on August 13th. They played during that time sixty-eight matches: two in Portland, seven in Scotland, forty-eight in England, five in Ireland, and six in Canada. Of these matches, sixty-one were against the Indians, four were International, and three were against Canadians.

The Canadian team won forty-four, the Indians won eleven, and thirteen were drawn.

In the Indian matches there were 452 games played, of which the Canadian won 269 and the Indians 183. In the International matches there were thirty seven games played, the Colonials winning thirty-two and the English and Iris players five.

In Canada ten games were played, the "Travelers" scoring six and the "Stay-at-Homes" four.

This makes the number of games won by the Canadian team 307, as against 192 won by their various opponents—a grand total of 499 games played. The party traveled, in making the tour, 10,646 miles—5033 by rail and 5,613 by steamers.

As was the case in the previous tour,

the expenses were largely in excess of the gate receipts, the traveling expenses and salaries of the Indians being a heavy item, but the individuals of the team gladly bore the drain upon their pockets in consideration of the magnificent outing they had, and which could not be procured under any other circumstances. Royalty patronized the matches on three occasions. The Prince and Princess of Wales witnessed a match at Hurlingham; Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar was present at the game at Southsea; and the Marquis of Lorne, then Governor-General of Canada, and the Princess Louise welcomed the travelers at Quebec on their return. At each of these matches the players were presented to the distinguished spectators. Numerous banquets were given in their honor, notably those by the Hurlingham, Empire and London Athletic Clubs, in London; the Birmingham Athletic Club and Mosely Harriers, in Birmingham; the Provost and Magistrates of the City of Inverness; and last, but by no means least, the North of Ireland Cricket Club and the North of Ireland Lacrosse Union, in Belfast. To those members who had been over with the pioneer team in 1876 the wonderful strides made by the game in public favor was a revelation. Large lacrosse communities were found in London, Manchester and Belfast. The game had also taken hold at Cambridge University, and was spreading through Yorkshire. A North of England and a South of England Lacrosse Association had been formed, as well as the Irish Lacrosse Union, with tributary associations; and matches, "England *vs.* Ireland" and "North *vs.* South," were of frequent occurrence.

At Kennington Oval, in London, a match was played between Canada and the United Kingdom, and, while the Canadians were, of course, much superior to their opponents, winning by a score of twelve to one, it was evident that with a little more training in the game, the magnificent physique of the English and Irish players would make them dangerous opponents. Some of these players were met again at Manchester, and they then made a much better stand; and, in fact, toward the end of the tour, in a match against the Irishmen at Belfast, the Canadians had to extend themselves very considerably

to win. The day previous to this match the Irishmen had succeeded in beating the Indians, who retaliated by beating the Canadians, and for a time it looked as if Canada was about to lose supremacy at her national pastime.

In 1884 an American team made a visit to Great Britain and clearly demonstrated that the United States had a better grasp of the Canadian game than their trans-Atlantic cousins. This team was organized under the captaincy of H. H. Balch, of New York, assisted by Hermann Oelrichs, a gentleman who has done a great deal for the game in the United States. Mr. Erastus Wiman also generously lent his aid to the enterprise, in fact guaranteeing expenses. The team consisted of fourteen players and the captain, The New York Lacrosse Club, the Union Lacrosse Club of Boston and Princeton University each supplied three players, while the Druids of Baltimore, Yale, Harvard and New York Universities, and the Calumet Club of Chicago, each sent a representative. Before their departure they met and defeated teams representing Yale, Princeton, Harvard, Baltimore and Philadelphia, as well as a picked team chosen from all of them. They sailed on May 3rd and returned July 6th. The matches played and results are as follows:

Against Cheshire County,	at Liverpool,	by 4 to 1.
" Lancashire,	Manchester,	" 4 to 0
" Yorkshire,	Sheffield,	" 8 to 0
" Notts,	Nottingham,	" 6 to 0
" South of England,	Hurlingham,	" 7 to 0
" Middlesex,	Wanstead,	drawn 0 to 0
" Cmb'dge Varsity,	Cambridge won by	6 to 0
" All England,	Catford B'dge,	" 2 to 0
" All Ireland,	Belfast,	" 3 to 2
" United Kingdom,		lost by 3 to 5

From this record it will be seen that the best stand was made by the Irishmen, especially when it is mentioned that in the only match they lost, *viz.*, against the United Kingdom, over two-thirds of the winning team were Irishmen. The team was most carefully looked after by the captain; rigid discipline and diet was insisted upon. As a pleasure trip it was not a success; as an athletic record it was. The trap is remarkable from the fact that it is the first lacrosse trip to England without Indians, local clubs being depended upon to provide matches. On their return to New York the tourists were met by the Toronto Lacrosse Club's team, which then held the championship of Canada. Two matches were played, one on the Staten Island Cricket Club's

ground and one on the Polo Grounds in New York. Both were easy victories for Toronto.

Yielding to the repeated invitations of both Canadians and Americans, in 1886 the Irish Lacrosse Union sent over a team which made a tour through Canada and the United States. Considerable enthusiasm and effort was necessary to get this team together, as it was rather embarrassing for the novices in the game to come to the fountain-head to give exhibitions. However, both enthusiasm and energy were available in the persons of John Sinclair of Belfast, the honorary secretary of the Irish Lacrosse Union, one of the best players of lacrosse in Great Britain, and Hugh C. Kelly, Deputy Sheriff of the County Down, another pioneer of the game in Ireland and captain of the Irish team. These gentlemen mustered a fairly representative team, although it did not by any means represent the full playing strength of Ireland. They landed in New York in August, 1886, and on the day following their landing were beaten by the All America team. They then came on to Montreal, and either through the excessive hospitality of their entertainers or their own eagerness to measure sticks with Canadian opponents, they essayed three matches in one afternoon, viz., against the Shamrock Lacrosse Club, against the Caughnawaga Indians and against a Canadian team. The Shamrock team strained proverbial Irish hospitality to the uttermost and lost the match, the other two teams were not so polite, and the Montreal Club, which played them a match later on, also beat them. After being royally entertained at Montreal, the team went to Toronto, Niagara Falls, St. Catherines, Richmond Hill and Ottawa. In all of these places they played matches and were hospitably entertained and well beaten on the field. They also played at Brockville, and that town has the unenviable notoriety of being the only place where discourteous treatment was accorded the visitors. Owing to the liberal treatment given the Irishmen by the players on this side of the water, the team was enabled to clear expenses, a matter of great congratulation to themselves and their entertainers.

The last trip of lacrosse players across the Atlantic was in 1888, when the Toronto Lacrosse Club sent a team over.

This trip was suddenly conceived and as suddenly carried to a successful issue. Correspondence started between Christmas, 1887, and New Year's, 1888, and early in February a list of fixtures was an established fact. On March 17th, a team under the captaincy of William Logan sailed from New York and returned to Toronto May 15th, having successfully organized, and as successfully carried out, a fifteen-match tour in Great Britain in four and a half months from its conception.

On this tour the Toronto's won all their matches, a fact not much to be wondered at, as, if not the best team in Canada at the time, they were strong aspirants for the title.

They played three matches in Manchester and vicinity, against Owens College, South Manchester, and Manchester and district. They also played against Heaton Mersey, against Nottingham and Yorkshire at Harrogate, against Yorkshire at Bradford, and against Liverpool and district.

In London, they defeated Cambridge University at West Kensington, South Essex at Wanstead, and the South of England at Richmond.

In Ireland, four matches were played at Belfast, the conquered teams being the Rugby Club, All Ireland, North of Ireland and the County Down. The hospitality and good-fellowship shown to this team could not be surpassed. The members were fêted and entertained everywhere. In England, one delicate piece of attention was a special saloon carriage for all their journeys placed at their disposal, along with all transportation free of charge. In Ireland, the members of the team were put up at the residences of prominent citizens of Belfast, and, the list of matches coming to a close three days before the date of their ship's sailing, the time was utilized by their entertainers in a drive along the north-east coast of Ireland to Londonderry.

The Irishmen have certainly well repaid those who entertained them or their representatives on this side of the water, and the Englishmen, by their good-fellowship on this and the other trips from America, have laid up a stock of gratitude which, it is to be hoped they will soon give Canadians and Americans a chance to unload on them by bringing over an English team.