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Canadian Curler's Manual, by James Bicket**

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Title: The Canadian Curler's Manual

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Release Date: June 16, 2010 [EBook #32838]

Language: English

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE CANADIAN CURLER'S
MANUAL ***

THE
**CANADIAN CURLER'S
MANUAL;**

OR

AN ACCOUNT OF CURLING,

AS PRACTISED

IN CANADA:

WITH REMARKS ON THE HISTORY OF THE GAME.

"When winter muffles up his cloak,
And binds the mire like a rock,
THEN to the loch the Curlers flock
Wi' gleesome speed."
BURNS.

BY JAMES BICKET,

SECRETARY TO THE TORONTO CURLING CLUB.

TORONTO:

**PUBLISHED AT THE OFFICE OF THE BRITISH COLONIST, FOR THE TORONTO
CURLING CLUB; SOLD ALSO BY HENRY ROWBELL.**

HUGH SCOBIE, PRINTER.

1840.

This reprint has been made possible
through the kindness of Mr. Thomas Rennie,
who loaned the original for the purpose.

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TO THE
PRESIDENT,
VICE-PRESIDENTS, MANAGERS,
AND
MEMBERS
OF THE
TORONTO CURLING CLUB,
THIS MANUAL
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY THEIR DEVOTED
HUMBLE SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

This little pamphlet has been produced at the request of the TORONTO CURLING CLUB. The original object in its publication was simply to furnish the Members with a copy of the Constitution of the Club, and of the laws which they observe in playing. The design is now extended, so as to embrace a general description of Curling, with a brief history of the Game; and by thus making it to be understood, by those who have never seen it played, or who may have been only occasional spectators, to induce a more general participation in this most healthful and exhilarating amusement.

It is gratifying to observe the success of the efforts which have been made in this country, during the last few years, to promote and encourage the Game. It is now becoming, and must become, a favorite in Canada. It is admirably adapted to this climate, where the winter is generally cold enough to ensure good ice, and seldom so severe as to render the exercise unpleasant. Being played in the open air, during a season when few out-of-door recreations can be enjoyed, it is well calculated to counteract the enfeebling influence of confinement to our close and heated winter houses. Many objections which may be brought against other sports, are not applicable to this. It calls up none of the low and degrading passions of our nature. Notwithstanding the intense interest which Curlers may feel in a well contested match, no betting ever takes place among them; the excitement arising from

gambling, therefore, is altogether removed from the rink. Intoxication on the ice is also unknown among good players. The nice equilibrium of body and the firmness of nerve, essential to scientific Curling, would disappear on the first symptom of such a state. But the Game is sufficiently interesting without any extraneous stimulant. While it imparts vigour to every limb, and every muscle, it engages the attention and awakens the judgment; and thus brings into healthful excitement those powers of the body and of the mind, the due exercise of which the Creator has allied with pleasure.

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In the observations which will be found on the early history of Curling, a liberal use has been made of a small but valuable work on the subject, published anonymously, in Kilmarnock, in 1828. To the same authority the writer is indebted for the derivation of several of the words to be found in the Glossary, and it is only doing the Compilers of the work referred to, an act of justice, which they can have no wish should be omitted, to state, that they have availed of "Doctor Jamieson's Dictionary," "Brewster's Encyclopedia," and an "Account of Curling, by a Member of the Duddingstone Society." These, unfortunately, are not at present accessible to the writer. During the present year, he ordered from Edinburgh such publications on the Game, as could be found; but was disappointed on learning, that several excellent Treatises which he expected to receive, are now out of print—the only works which his Correspondent could procure, being the "Annual of the Grand Caledonian Curling Club" and the "Rules of Curling, by Pretostes."

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The writer has affixed his name to this work—conceiving that from his official connection with the Toronto Curling Club, since its establishment, this may lend some weight to the opinions, and some authority to the statements therein contained.

TORONTO, 30th NOVEMBER, 1840.

PART I.

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CURLING.—Is a Game played upon the ice, by sliding stones, made for the purpose, from one point to another. In some respects it resembles Bowling, but with these differences, that the stones are slidden upon the ice, not rolled—neither are they made like Bowls, to curve on their passage; the points, also, to which the stones are played are stationary, whereas in Bowling the Jack is moveable; and in Curling, the ice in the path of the stone may be polished by sweeping—and thus the players may compensate for the want of force with which a stone may have been thrown.

Pennant, in his "Tour through Scotland" gives the following rough description of the Game:—"Of all the sports in those parts, that of Curling is the favorite. It is an amusement of the winter, and played upon the ice, by sliding from one mark to another, great stones of 40 to 70 lbs. weight, of a hemispherical form, with a wooden or iron handle at top. The object of the player is to lay his stone as near the mark as possible, to guard that of his partner which has been well laid before, or to strike off that of his antagonist." Such is a brief outline of that Game, a fuller description of which is attempted in the following pages.

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STONES.—These are made of granite, or of any other stone which is hard, free from sand, and not liable to break. They are cut into a spherical form, flattened at top and bottom, and the angles rounded off and polished, particularly that at the sole. The handle is inserted in the top. Though they must all be made circular, the proportion of the diameter to the thickness varies in different districts; some being made more and some less than twice as wide as they are thick. The Grand Caledonian Curling Club has lately suggested the following scale—the first attempt that has been made to regulate the proportions of Curling Stones—and which for the sake of uniformity, it is hoped, will be adopted, viz:—

"When the weight is under

35 lbs.	imp., the height not to be more than	4¼ inches.
38 lbs.		4½ inches.
41 lbs.		4¾ inches.
44 lbs.		5 inches.
47 lbs.		5¼ inches.
50 lbs.		5½ inches.

"Whatever be the diameter or weight, the height ought never to exceed 6½ inches, nor be less than 4¼ inches—None ought to be allowed in a set game of greater diameter than 12 inches, nor of a greater weight than 50 lbs. imperial."

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Stones are sometimes so finished as to slide on either of the flattened surfaces, one of which in such cases, is made slightly concave, and on this side the stone is played when the ice is hard and keen; the other, a little convex, being used when the ice is soft and dull.

In some parts of Canada, where suitable stone cannot readily be procured, iron or wood has been substituted. At Quebec and Montreal, castings of iron, in the shape of Curling Stones, are played with—the intensity of the cold there, rendering the stones liable to break on striking against one another. Iron is used also by the Curlers of Dundas, in the Gore District; and at Guelph, where the Game has some ardent admirers, they play with blocks of hard wood. At Toronto, and the Curling localities in the neighborhood, stones only have been used; part having been imported from Scotland, and others having been made by the stone-cutter to the Club, from blocks of excellent quality picked up by him on the land in the vicinity. Several of the stones imported to Toronto have been made from Ailsa Craig, which, it appears, has long been known as an excellent material for the purpose; one of those now referred to having been played with by the father of the present owner, at least sixty years ago.

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THE RINK.—The ice on which the game is played is called the Rink. This should be a sheet of fifty yards in length and four yards in width; perfectly free from every inequality. At the distance of four yards from each end of the rink, and in the middle crosswise, a circular hole is made, about an inch in diameter and the same in depth, called the “tee.” Round the tee two or more circular lines are drawn, the largest having a diameter of about five feet, the others smaller and at intermediate distances. The space within the largest circle is called the “brough.” The use of the circular lines is to shew, while the game is being played, the comparative nearness of the stones to the tee; actual measurement not being allowed until all the stones have been played to one end of the rink. A line is also drawn across the tee, at right angles with the rink lengthwise, and extending to the outermost circle, the use of which will be shewn in the remarks relating to sweeping. At the distance of seven yards from each of the tees a line is drawn across the rink, called the “hog-score,” and stones which on being played do not pass this score are called “hogs” and lose for that time the chance of counting, being distanced or thrown off the rink.

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PLAYING.—When the player is about to throw his stones, he places himself at one end of the rink, rests his right foot in a notch, or “hack” made in the ice,^[1] and in such a relation to the tee that when he delivers his stone it must pass over it. He is directed by one of the players of his own party, styled the “skip” who stands at or near the tee to which the stone is to be played, and who usually makes use of his broom to indicate the point to which, or the line along which, he wishes the stone to be played. Should the stone be delivered with the proper degree of strength, and in the direction pointed out to the player by the skip, it will either rest at the spot required, or receiving, as the skip intended, a new direction by coming in contact with some other stone, will effect the desired purpose. The player on delivering his stone raises it off the ice, and swinging it once behind him to acquire a proper *impetus*, and to make surer of his aim, keeping his eye, at the same time, steadily fixed on the broom of the skip, or on any stone, or other object towards or against which he may be desired to play, throws it in that direction. The stone reaching the ice on its sole about two feet in front of the player—his body naturally following the same direction until the stone be fairly delivered.

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[1] Other contrivances than the hack are used in some places to prevent the foot of the player from slipping. Sometimes a thin board is laid on the ice, on which he places both his feet. At Toronto, the hack is considered the best, and although the Club has “crampits” for the benefit of those accustomed to them, they are required only by strangers or novices, experience demonstrating their uselessness.

SWEEPING.—For the purpose of Sweeping, every player is furnished with a broom, by means of which the ice may sometimes be so polished that a stone may reach the tee, which, without sweeping, could not have passed the hog score. When a stone, therefore, in its progress up the rink appears to the skip to have been thrown with insufficient force, he directs his party to sweep the ice in its path. The party opposed to that whose stone is coming up is not allowed to sweep in front of the line drawn across the brough, but may sweep behind it, so as to let the stone, if it should pass the tee, go far enough beyond it, to lose the chance of counting.

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The brooms used in Scotland are usually made of “broom,” sometimes of birch twigs, and occasionally of heather, as one or other may be found most convenient to the place of playing. In Canada, “corn brooms” which have been used for domestic purposes a sufficient length of time to be stripped of the knotty parts which might break off and obstruct the progress of the stone, have been found to be the best. Some Curlers in Scarboro’, near Toronto, who have immigrated from Lanarkshire, have imported stocks of the genuine Scotch broom, which, under their cultivation, thrives so well as to promise to supersede the use of every other material.

THE GAME.—The usual mode of playing the game is with 16 stones on a rink. This number is sufficient to impart interest to the playing, and more would towards the end of the head, crowd the ice. Sometimes these are played by four players on each side, playing two stones each, which mode may be preferable when a few only are exercising for practice; but in such case the sweeping, which—unless the ice be very keen—is essential to success, can never be properly attended to, as the skip and player being sufficiently occupied in their own departments, only two brooms can be effectively employed at the same time. The most interesting game, therefore, is where there are sixteen players on a rink, with one stone each, eight players on each side; and a game so played is now to be described.

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The parties determine by lot which is to “have the ice” or in other words, which is to play the first stone. It is doubtful whether it be an advantage to win the ice, as the party who loses this plays the last stone—the most important in determining the result of the head. The side who wins the end plays the first stone on the end following.

The skip of the party who is to play first, stationing himself on that tee towards which the stones are to be thrown, directs the player who is to “lead” or play the first stone, on his side. When this stone is played the skip of the opposite party takes the same post, pointing out to his first player how he wishes his stone to be played. Each side plays one stone alternately, and the object of each successive player is to draw nearer the tee than any of his opponents, to strike out their winning shots, or to guard the winners of his own party. The earlier stages of the end therefore appear simple enough; but after the first eight or ten stones have been played, especially when they have been played well, the game becomes more intricate and more interesting. One party may have a stone covering the tee, apparently guarded on every side, and impregnable to attack, the stones of their opponents having only strengthened its position; yet some stone which, either from a *ruse* on the part of the director, or from being badly played, has rested near the edge of the rink and seems to be lost for that end, may furnish a point to which another stone may be slidden, and receiving thence a new direction may reach the winner, and removing it from the tee, become itself the winning stone.

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The director generally plays the last stone on his own side. The seventh player is usually appointed to that position in the order of the game on account of his being a correct and powerful player, so that he may, when necessary, open up a path for the stone of the “hind hand.”

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When the stones are all played to one end of the rink, the game is counted, and every stone which either party has nearer the tee than any stone of their opponents, counts one shot or point; and such portion of the game is styled an “end” or “head.”

The number of shots in a game is variable, depending on agreement. The Toronto Club usually play for 31, in a regular game; and in their matches among themselves, or with the Scarborough’ Curlers, when more than one rink has been engaged, the practice has been, either to play to an hour specified, or to stop before that hour should the aggregate shots of either party on all the rinks collectively amount to thirty-one for each rink. In Scotland, where the continuance of the curling season is very precarious, all who have it in their power, play the whole of every day while the ice will permit, and, consequently, the number of shots played for is more uniform. At Toronto, where Curling may be practised almost daily, fully three months in the year, the rink is resorted to for one or two hours’ recreation, and seven, thirteen, or twenty-one shots are frequently fixed on as the game, according to the time intended to be devoted to the exercise.

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LAWS OF THE GAME.—In every district of Scotland, and in almost every club, some differences are to be found in the mode of conducting the game. Little difficulty, however, is there experienced from the want of written laws, the *lex non scripta* of every parish or county being perfectly understood where it is in force. Still in Edinburgh and a few other places where Curlers from distant Clubs are likely to meet, it has been found necessary to have their laws reduced to writing so that from whatever part of the country the player might come, he could not be ignorant of the rules by which his playing was to be governed. At Toronto, the want of a written code of laws, was for a number of years, felt to be inconvenient—few of the original Curlers having been accustomed to play exactly according to the same system. It was, therefore, one of the first objects of the Toronto Curling Club, after its formation, to draw up a set of Rules, founded on the prevailing practice in Scotland. The following, therefore, were agreed to—and although not applicable to every case that may be conceived, they have been found sufficient to decide, satisfactorily, every difficulty that has occurred during the experience of four years; and have been cheerfully agreed to by the Scarborough’ Curlers, in their matches with those of Toronto.

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1st.—The Rink to be forty-two yards from tee to tee,^[2] unless otherwise agreed upon by the parties. When a game is begun the rink cannot be changed or altered unless by the consent of a majority of players, and it can be shortened only when it is apparent that a majority cannot play the length.

2nd.—The hog score must be distant from the tee one-sixth part of the length of the rink. Every stone to be deemed a hog, the sole of which, when at rest, does not completely clear the score.

3rd.—Every player to foot so that in delivering his stone, it shall pass over the tee.

4th.—The order of playing adopted at the beginning must not be changed during a game.

5th.—Curling-stones must be of a circular shape. No stone to be changed during a game,^[3] unless it happen to be broken; and the largest fragment of such stone to count, without any necessity of playing with it more. If a stone roll or be upset, it must be placed upon its sole where it stops. Should the handle quit a stone in the delivery, the player must keep hold of it, otherwise he will not be entitled to replay the shot.

6th.—The player may sweep his own stone the whole length of the rink; his party not to sweep until it has passed the first hog score, and his adversaries not to sweep until it has passed the tee—the sweeping to be always to a side.

7th.—None of the players, on any account, to cross or go upon the middle of the rink.

8th.—If, in sweeping or otherwise, a running stone is marred by any of the party to which it belongs, it must be put off the rink; if by any of the adverse party, it must be placed agreeably to the direction which was given to the player; and if it be marred by any other means, the player may take his shot again. Should a stone at rest be accidentally displaced, it must be put as near as possible in its former situation.

9th.—Every player must be ready when his turn comes,^[4] and must take only a reasonable time to play his shot—should he, by mistake, play with a wrong stone, it must be replaced where it stops, by the one which he ought to have played.

10th.—A doubtful shot must be measured by a neutral person, whose determination shall be final.

11th.—The skips alone shall direct the game. The players of the respective skips may offer them their advice, but cannot control their directions; nor is any person, except the skip, to address him who is about to play. Each skip may appoint one of his party to take charge for him, when he is about to play. Every player to follow the direction given to him.

12th.—Should any question arise, the determination of which may not be provided for by the words and spirit of the preceding Rules, each party to choose one of their number, in order to determine it. If the two so chosen differ in opinion, they are to name an umpire, whose decision shall be final.

[2] The Grand Caledonian Curling Club recommend that rinks have double tees at each end, the one at least two yards behind the other; the whole four to be nearly as possible on the same line. The stones are to be delivered from the outer tee and played towards the inner; this saves the ice from being injured around the tee played up to.

[3] With regard to double-soled stones, the Grand Caledonian Curling Club has a law that the side commenced with shall not, under forfeiture of the match, be changed during the progress of the game.

[4] An excellent method of obviating the confusion which is sometimes experienced in the early ends of a game, by players being doubtful of their places is, that before commencing, the players on each side of a rink should “fall in” in the order in which it is intended they shall play, and “number off from right to left.” The player who makes a mistake after this has been done is fit neither for a Curler nor a Soldier. This method has been practised at Toronto since the winter of 1837-38—when military terms and ideas were infused into every department of life.

When a few players are curling for practice, or recreation, some of the above laws may not be rigidly enforced; but any relaxation should always be noticed, so that there may be no difficulty in strictly adhering to them when playing a *Bonspiel*, or set game.

The preceding account has been, as far as practicable, divested of technical terms, in order that it might be the more intelligible to the uninitiated. Many of the words and phrases, however, used in Curling are peculiar to the game—throwing light on its origin and history,—and it would now be as difficult for Curlers to abolish the language of the rink, as it would be for the gentlemen of certain learned professions, to substitute the Queen’s English for their most unclassical Latin. An explanation of the following terms, which are in constant use, is therefore indispensable in a work of this nature;

Angled Guard—A stone which obliquely covers or guards one stone or more.

Bias—An inclination in the ice, tending to lead a stone off the direction given to it by the player.

Block the ice—See “fill the ice.”

Boardhead—See “brough.”

Bonspel, bonspiel, bonspeel—(French, *bon*, good, and Belgic, *spell*, a play—a good game; or Suio-Gothic, *bonne*, a husbandman; or Belgic, *bonne*, a village or district; because one district challenges another to play at this game.) A match at Curling between two opposite parties.

Break an egg on—To strike one stone very gently with another.

Brough—(Alemanic, *bruchus*, a camp, often circular). The space within the largest circle drawn round the tee.

Channel-stane—A Curling stone is so named in the southern counties of Scotland, probably from stones found in streams having been first used for curling.

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Chuckle to—To make two or more inwicks up a port to a given stone.

Creep—(Come creeping up the rink) the stones are said to creep when they are thrown with little force.

Curling—(German, *kurzweillin*, to play for amusement; or Teutonic, *krullen*, *krollen*, *SINUARE*, to bend,—as the great art of the game is to make the stones *bend*, *twist* (*quod vide*), *CURL*, towards the mark, when they cannot reach it in a straight line.) Sliding stones along the ice towards a mark.

Dead guard—A stone which completely covers another, concealing it from the view of the next player, is a dead guard upon that other.

Deliver—To throw the stone.

Director—The same as “skip” or “skipper.”

Draw a shot—to play to a spot pointed out by the director, having no other stone to strike or rest upon.

Dour, drug, dull—The state of the ice when the stone cannot easily be thrown the length of the rink.

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End—That portion of the game in which the stones are all played to one end of the rink.

Guard—To lay a stone in a line before another; or the stone so laid.

Hack, or hatch—(Icelandic, *hiaka*, or Suio-Gothic, *hacka*, a chop, cut, or crack), a cut in the ice, in which the player places his foot to prevent it from slipping as he delivers his stone.

Head—See “End.”

Hindhand—He who plays the last stone on his side.

Hog Score—The line drawn across the rink, about seven yards from the tee; stones which do not pass this are thrown aside.

How ice—The ice in the middle of the rink, *hollowed* by the friction of the stones; also called *white ice*.

Inring, inwick—See “*Wicking*.”

Keen—The opposite of dour.

Leader—He who plays first in order in his party.

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Lie in the bosom of—To play a stone so as gently to touch and lie before another.

Outwick—See “*Wicking*.”

Pat lid—A Curling stone lying on the tee.

Port—An opening between two stones, wide enough to admit another to be played through.

Rack—A word used in some districts instead of rink.

Redd the ice—(Icelandic, *rada* *ORDINARE*, to put in order; also, to warn, to advise,) to clear the ice, or to break the guards with a stone strongly played, so as to expose the tee or the winner; to “ride” successfully.

Rest—To draw to any object or point so as not to pass it.

Ride—To throw a stone with great force towards one or more other stones, in order to remove them from their position.

Rink—The ice on which the game is played.

Shot—A stone played; in another sense, a stone which counts.

Skip, or skipper—(Probably from Suio-Gothic, *skeppare*, a master), a director.

Tee—(Icelandic, *tia*, to point out the place; or, Teutonic, *tygh-en*, to point to), the winning point to which the stones are played.

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Twist—To give to a stone, on its being delivered, a rotary motion, so that it revolves on its sole as it slides along the rink, and bends from the straight line, when the

force with which it has been thrown is nearly exhausted.

Wicking, wick, inwick—(Suio-Gothic, *wick*, a corner; or Teutonic, *wyck*, a turning), to make a stone take an oblique direction by striking another on the side.

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PART II.

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HISTORY OF CURLING

The early history of Curling is involved in such obscurity, that the time even of the antiquarians might be better employed in eating Beef and Greens, or in playing the Game, than in endeavoring to discover its origin. Some of these gentlemen have, from the definition given of a certain word in an old dictionary, come to the conclusion that Curling was originally the game of quoits played upon the ice. Kilian, in his *Etymologica Teutonice Linguae*, renders the Teutonic words "*kluyten*," "*kalluyten*," *ludere massis, sive globis glaciatis; certare discis in aequore glaciato*. The term *kluyte*, or *klyte*, is still used in some parts of Scotland, where it always signifies to "fall flat" or to fall so that the broadest part of the falling body first comes in contact with the ground; but it never has any reference to moving on a plane surface. The words *ludere* and *certare* throw no light on the manner in which the *globus* or *discus* was used. But until it can be shown that they were moved upon the ice—not pitched through the air—it is difficult to perceive the relation between "kluyten" and curling. As soon as the stones were played by being slidden—if the antiquarians could only determine the period of that event—a new game was introduced, affording opportunities equal to those of the quoit for muscular exercise, and a much wider field for the exercise of the judgment.

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The earliest notice of Curling which has been discovered is in Cambden's *Britannia*, published in 1607. In it, Coppinsha, one of the Orkney islands, is mentioned as famous for "excellent stones for the game called Curling." This shows that it was then in considerable repute. In the "Life of William Guthrie", who in the year 1644 was ordained minister of Fenwick, in Ayrshire, it is stated that he was fond of the innocent recreations which then prevailed, "among which was Curling." In 1684, the game is taken notice of in Fountainhall's Decisions. Pennycuik, also in the seventeenth century, declares that

"To curl on the ice doth greatly please,
Being a manly Scottish exercise."

And he celebrates the game as calculated

"To clear the brain, stir up the native heart,
And give a gallant appetite for meat."

Ramsay has alluded to Curling. Burns, in "Tam Samson's Elegy" shows, in few words that he himself understood the game. Grahame, the author of the "Sabbath" has illumined the rink with the lustre of his own genius; and Curling forms the subject of a beautiful part of "Fisher's Winter Season."

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Though the game has never been universal in Scotland, it has long been practised in almost every county south of the Forth and the Clyde. The shires of Ayr, Renfrew, Lanark and Dumfries are remarkable for their attachment to Curling. It is played in Perthshire, the Countess of Mansfield, being now patroness of the Scone and Perth Club; but we are not aware of its having been, until lately, practised farther north. In Aberdeen—that city of northern lights—it is unknown. The Editor of the Aberdeen Herald, who is a native of a Curling district, laments in his paper of 13th January, 1838—that all was then bound up in the icy stillness of the season, and that in a place abounding with the material for making admirable curling stones, and with arms strong enough to wield them,

"No friendly combatants contested the field."

The game was played near Inverness, in 1838, when Loch-na-Sanais (or the whispering lake), with the picturesque hills of Tomnahurich and Torvain, echoed, for the first time, to the booming of the stones over the ice.

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Curling has long been held in high estimation in Edinburgh. About the beginning of last century "the magistrates marched in a body to the North Loch, to spend the day in Curling. In going and returning they were preceded by a band of music, playing appropriate airs." It was the custom in Paisley, not many years ago, to send round the town drummer, after two or three nights' hard frost, to proclaim to the inhabitants where the Curlers should meet in the morning; and in the morning, should the frost continue, hundreds might be seen—manufacturers, bailies, weavers, and clergymen,—resorting promiscuously to the rendezvous; for on the ice all are on a *level*—all ordinary distinctions in society are, for the time, forgotten in the love of

the game, and the noble and the learned are there willing to be directed by the most skilful player, though this should happen to be the humblest of their neighbors.

In some of the agricultural districts of Scotland, the extent of Curling Clubs is regulated by the legal divisions of the country, being again sub-divided among themselves into rinks, who always play together under their respective skips;—the organization resembling in many respects that of the Militia of Canada—and on the occasion of a contest with another club, every man who, if in this country should be liable to serve as a soldier, turns out willingly for the honour of his *corps*. There, however, age procures no exemption from service. In the words of Grahame,

“When rival parishes and shrievedoms keep,
On upland loch, the long expected tryst,
To play their yearly bonspiel, AGED MEN,
Smit with the eagerness of youth, ARE THERE,
While love of conquest lights their beamless eyes,
New nerves their arms and makes them young once more.”

On 20th January, 1838, the parish of Lesmahagow, in Lanarkshire, met the neighboring club of Avondale, on a sheet of ice, near Strathaven. Each club consisted of twenty-one rinks of eight players, making the number of players on each side one hundred and sixty-eight, so that three hundred and thirty-six Curlers were engaged in the match. Such a bonspiel as this may not take place every season, but this instance, which is referred to, as being of recent occurrence, is sufficient to shew the interest which in such districts is taken in the game, and, also, the excellence of the organization which could bring so many players together on a notice so short as that which can be given, where the continuance of hard frost cannot be depended on.

It is now about twenty years since Curling was introduced to Canada, and since that time the game has been regularly played at Quebec and Montreal. The Clubs of those Cities, in imitation of their friends on the other side of the Atlantic, have occasional contests with each other. The match which they last had, came off in March of the present year, and was played at both places on the same day—one-half of the players from each City having proceeded to the other—so that the result of the joint game could not be known at either place, until the parties had time to communicate. A few years ago, the Bonspiel took place at Three Rivers. The distance which, in those cases, the players had to travel, sufficiently shows how warmly they are devoted to the game.

During the last winter, the officers stationed at some of the posts to the south of Montreal, relieved the monotony of military duty, by engaging in Curling. The game has been practised at Perth, in the Bathurst District, although now fallen into disuse there. At Niagara, a rink was formed four years ago, one gentleman having imported a sufficient number of stones for their use, and great interest is now taken in the sport. At Newmarket, about 30 miles to the north of Toronto, there is a Curling Club, the minister, like many of his brethren at home, being an active promoter of the game, and an exact and skilful player. Curling is now also a favorite amusement at Dundas at the head of Lake Ontario; at Guelph, in the new District of Wellington; and at Fergus, in the township of Nicholl. There are also, many first-rate players in Scarboro' who are always ready to measure their strength, in numbers and skill, with those of Toronto, and both enjoy the *certaminis gaudia* in their annual bonspiel. They played at Toronto, on 12th February last, with twenty-four players aside, when their Excellencies the Governor General and the Lieutenant Governor were spectators of the game.

The Fergus Club has been mentioned above, but is worthy of more particular notice, being perhaps, the first which was regularly organized in Upper Canada. The settlement of that neighborhood was begun in 1834, and the gloom of the first winter was dispelled by the introduction of the game. In the course of the winter following, the Honourable Adam Fergusson, who is the principal proprietor and the enlightened founder of the settlement, succeeded in forming the players into a club, of which he was the first President, and which now numbers upwards of thirty members. They play with blocks of hard wood, turned to the proper shape, which they have found to answer the purpose, except when the ice is dull. The experiment has been made of loading the blocks with lead, in order that the size and weight may bear about the same proportion to each other as in Curling stones, and this they consider a decided improvement.

The example of the Curlers of Fergus, in constituting a club, ought to be followed in every neighborhood where there are players sufficient for one rink. The permanency of the game and opportunities of playing may thus be secured in places where, without such arrangement, the greatest difficulty might be experienced in bringing the players together. Although the game has been played at Toronto, every winter, since 1829, it was never enjoyed to the same extent as it has been since the formation of the Club in 1836. By the judicious arrangement of the managers, in appointing the hours of playing, and in having the ice ready before the Curlers meet, the time which was formerly wasted in preparations that may be performed by laborers, is now spent in the game; and thus the recreation can be shared by many,

who should otherwise, by the nature of their occupations, be excluded from the rink. Wherever, on this continent, Curling has been introduced and not continued, its decline is attributable to the want of that system which the proper organization of a club would ensure. Wherever Curlers have been united, in the way now recommended, they have been enabled to attract constant accessions to their numbers, and, by spreading throughout their respective neighborhoods a love of the game, to establish its permanency beyond the chance of decay.

Mr. John Graham, of New York, the best authority in the United States, in every matter connected with Scottish nationality, as existing there,—and who permits his name to be used on this occasion,—stated during his recent visit to Toronto, that the game was sometimes played at New York, but there being no Club, a special arrangement was always necessary before any meeting on the ice could take place. If the New York curlers were to unite, there can be no doubt that the game would “go a-head” there, and that in a few winters hence, we should hear of their having a bonspiel with their friends in Canada, either at Montreal or Toronto.

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A few plain rules are sufficient for the government of a Curling Club. The following Constitution, which was agreed upon by the Toronto Curlers, has been found to answer every purpose for which it was intended. A few additional regulations have since been made, but these are only of a local or temporary nature.

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

TORONTO CURLING CLUB

ARTICLE 1st.—The Office-bearers of the Club shall consist of a President, two Vice-Presidents, four Managers, and a Secretary and Treasurer, who, after the first election, shall be elected at the Annual Meeting in December, to be called as provided in Article 5th.

ARTICLE 2nd.—Any person wishing to become a Member, may be proposed at any regular Meeting of the Club, and if the proposal be seconded, the election shall proceed, when the votes of a majority of three-fourths of the Members present, and the payment of the Entrance Fee and of one year’s subscription, as provided in Article 3rd, shall be required for the admission of the applicant.

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ARTICLE 3rd.—In order to provide a Fund to meet necessary expenses, Members shall pay on admission the sum of — as entrance fee, and also the sum of — as their first year’s subscription; and shall afterwards pay such annual subscription as may be determined by the Club at the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE 4th.—The Committee shall draw up the Rules of the Game according to the prevailing practice in Scotland; which Rules, when entered on the Books of the Club and read at a regular Meeting, shall regulate the playing, and shall be decisive in all disputes among the Members; and may also, in case of playing with other Clubs, regulate the match, unless objected to by such other Club.

ARTICLE 5th.—The Annual Meeting, when Office-bearers shall be elected, shall be held on the first Tuesday of December; and regular Meetings shall also be held on the first Tuesday in January, February and March in every year, at such place as the President may appoint; to be properly intimated to the Members; and occasional Meetings of the Club may also be called by the President, whenever he may consider it expedient.

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ARTICLE 6th.—Members shall pay their annual subscription to the Treasurer within one month after the amount of the same shall be determined; and on failing to do so, they shall be considered as having withdrawn from the Club.

ARTICLE 7th.—The Rules of the Club may be altered or new rules added, with the consent of three-fourths of the Members present at any regular Meeting; such alterations or additions having been proposed at the regular Meeting preceding.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE CANADIAN CURLER'S
MANUAL ***

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