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SOMETHING ABOUT CURLING.

Many are the subjects with which the editor of a small paper like the "Swiss Observer" has to deal. Whilst other papers — more affluent — can afford literary, music, political, news and social editors, in the case of the small paper all these matters have to be dealt with by one man.

I recently received an invitation from a member of the City Swiss Club — and a prominent man in the Colony — to watch a curling match between his club (The London Curling Club) and a Scottish team.

With some trepidation I accepted the invitation, having to confess that, although I had watched this game at various winter sports resorts in our country in the past, I had but little knowledge of the rules governing this sport.

During our journey from the City to the Richmond ice-rink I was briefly acquainted with some particulars of the sport, and, having afterwards watched it played for some time, I must say that I found it fascinating.

Previously to having been initiated into the secrets of the game, I was always highly amused when watching the frantic sweeping of the ice in front of the moving "stone", thinking that if everybody would sweep so efficiently before his own door, the world would be a happier place in which to dwell!

On being introduced to various prominent members of the Club, who I was told were all experts of the game, and who — like my friend — are frequent visitors to winter sports centres such as St. Moritz, Zermatt, Davos, Lenzerheide, Mürren, etc., I was pleasantly struck by the friendly atmosphere which prevailed amongst the curling fraternity, noting that they addressed each other only by their family names.

For the benefit of those who are not familiar with curling (which I understand originated in Scotland in 1511, and was not introduced on the continent of Europe until 1881, being first played at St. Moritz), I will endeavour to give some information which I gathered when watching the match (which I am pleased to say was won by my friend's equipe).

A curling rink is 42 yards long, and the game is played in both directions along it. The stones have a weight of thirty to forty-four pounds. Each player "puts down" two of these. His endeavour is to deliver the stone with a certain rotary or curling motion that will help to bring it as near as possible to the centre of a circle or "house" at the other end of the rink. This centre is marked by a "tee" or

"dolly", and the diameter of the circle is fixed at seven feet. The points or "shots" gained by one team are measured by the number of stones of this team lying nearer the tee than the nearest stone of the opposing side.

A curling team consists of four players, each of whom puts down two stones, so that a complete set, known as a "head" or "end", comprises sixteen stones. A full game consists of nine, eleven or thirteen heads. Each of the teams chooses its captain or "skip", whose instructions it must then follow. The industrious sweeping of the ice in front of the moving stone is done on orders from the skip. The playing team is entitled to sweep from the "hog score" to the "sweeping score", their opponents from the sweeping score to the "back score", which lies seven feet behind the sweeping score. All of these "scores" are lines marked on the ice transversely to the line of play. The sweeping score passes through the centre of the circle where the tee is placed, while the hog score lies seven yards before the sweeping score.

I hope that these few particulars will encourage some of my readers to take up this sport, which is a stimulating and healthy one. I was delighted and fascinated to watch this particular match.

ST.

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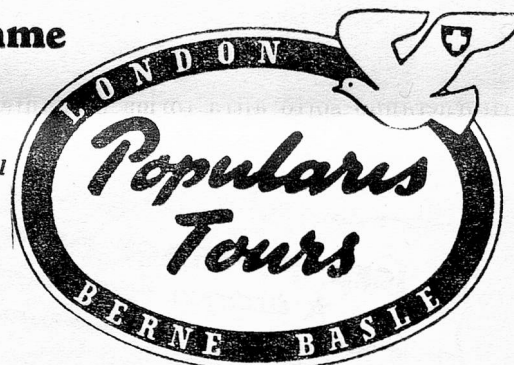
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