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PLAYFELLOWS AT HOME.

Countess of Minto and Her Children—Where the Governor-General Also Joins in Their Romps.

People who complain of the so-called American method of dealing with the rising generation may be interested to know that it is the one pursued by the Countess of Minto, whose husband is the Governor-General of Canada, says a writer in the New York Times. Time was when it was almost impossible to see the children of a Governor-General, if he had any, but Lord Minto's children are always in evidence. They and their parents are the jolliest kind of comrades, and are constantly together. The children share in all the pleasures of their elders, and with the exception of functions of state are present at all social affairs at Government House. They are prominent figures in the private theatricals, which are a favorite form of entertainment under the present regime, and the older ones appear with their parents at the theatre, at skating carnivals, and at various other places.

The Earl and Countess seem, indeed, more like an elder brother and sister with their children than like father and mother. The Governor-General can romp like a school-boy, it is said in the privacy of his family, and Lady Minto, so far from being characterized by that severity which is often associated with the English mother, is the most sympathetic of confidantes for childish troubles.

"I have no doubt you did very well," she is reported to have said once to a small daughter who was complaining of the zeal of her governess, "but you know Froy—a family abbreviation for Fraulein—is never satisfied."

Lady Minto thinks that nothing is too good for her children, and in spite of her numerous social duties and the burdens of public work which she has voluntarily assumed, she finds time to attend personally to their dress and education and everything pertaining to their welfare. Three of the best and pleasantest rooms at Government House have been set apart for their use, and all sorts of pleasant affairs, of which the other children of the Canadian capital often get the benefit, are constantly being planned for them.

Christmas, though celebrated quietly, with only the household and house party, is a great occasion, and much trouble is taken to make the advent of Santa Claus interesting.

One year the great ball-room was converted into a winter garden, with trees that bore the presents, real socks and any quantity of frost and snow. On another occasion the good ship Santa Claus, ablaze with lights from stem to stern, cast anchor at Fort Elliott, and proved to have all sorts of wonderful things in her hold.

Whatever may be the effect of this system of education on American children, it has certainly produced some of the most desirable results.

In the case of the young romps. They are absolutely simple and unassuming young people, and appear to be quite unconscious that their position in life is any different from that of ordinary mortals. Lady Eileen, who came out only last winter, and is now eighteen years of age, is immensely popular in Canadian society, and of Lord Melgund, the eldest son, who is about twelve, many pretty stories are told. One of these dates back to the great Ottawa fire, when his small lordship attracted much attention by giving his boots to a little fire sufferer who had the misfortune to be without footgear.

"I didn't need them," he explained to the horrified members of his party, from whom he had strayed for a few minutes, "as I am going to drive home, and the other boy hadn't any."

There is one other son, the Hon. Esmond Elliot, a fascinating little fellow of six or seven, and two daughters, who come between Lord Melgund and Lady Eileen. Lady Ruby is just a little younger than the eldest sister, and will probably be introduced with her to English society next year. Lady Violet is a jolly little girl in her earliest teens, who is generally regarded as her father's favorite.

As a housewife Lady Minto can scarcely be said to have any American characteristics, for she gives careful attention to the prosaic details of housekeeping, and is an excellent manager.

Lady Minto's public work has not attracted so much attention as that of her predecessor, the Countess of Aberdeen, but it is perhaps not less important. She does things in a different way, but she works very nearly as hard and to quite as much purpose. Her chief public interest in Canada has been the Victorian Order of Nurses, and the organization owes much to her untiring exertions. Through her efforts numerous cottage hospitals which cannot fail to have an important effect on immigration have been established in the sparsely settled districts of Canada, and she is now engaged in getting the order endowed at an expense of \$125,000. For education, particularly manual training and domestic science, Lady Minto has also done much, and it is mainly through her efforts that the graves of the Canadian soldiers who fell in South Africa are now being located and marked.

In appearance Lady Minto is strikingly youthful and so like her eldest daughter that they are often taken for one another. She is a tall, slight woman, dresses very artistically, and always wears and has flowers about her. Her manner has a charm which is not easily defined, but which has combined with her rarer and more serious qualities to make her one of the most popular of British Vic-Queens.

Willie—Have you heard the latest, Gus?
Gus—No.
"Cholly's half-brother is engaged to Reggie's half-sister."
"When will they be made one."

CANADIAN TARPON.

Newspaper Sport Finds Them and Sees Exciting Sport Done With the Aid of a Special Harpoon.

It occasions surprise to the visitors who occasionally come to fish the rivers tributary to Gaspe Basin, Bay of Chaleur, for salmon and sea trout to find boats lying around fitted out for harpooning, and to discover that men are still rated according to their skill as harpooners. They are so rated. But how are the mighty fallen! It is no longer against the mighty mammals of the north seas that their energies are directed. There is no return value in oil, whalebone, or ambergris to make their homecoming eventful. The stern business has become a sport now, and the men who would have struck and played and lanced a prey of tons in weight in those days are content now to get fast to and kill fish of 200 or, at most, 300 pounds.

It is rare sport they engage in, though little known and seldom heard of outside of the bay. The fish is the tarpon, with energies greatly multiplied by the cool northern waters.

They tell a tale at Point St. Peter, on the other side of the bay, of a medical man who had labored among the tarpon of Santa Barbara, Cal., and came to investigate the Gulf of St. Lawrence variety, writes a sporting newspaper man.

Against all local advice he persisted in trying for the monsters with hook and line. He persuaded a local fisherman to hire a little lad to row him off to where a little herd were sporting themselves, and after long hours of fruitless casting induced a lusty youngster to fasten on. Springing to his feet to play his fish, he showed himself to the creature, which contemptuously yanked him out of the boat in an instant and then sallied away with his expensive tackle. The sports herabout learned long ago that it was no use trying to take these fish with rod and tackle.

A pretty little harpoon, with a regular detachable hinged shaft, has been invented for the purpose. To it is "bent on," as the harpooners say, a very long quarter-inch line of great strength. This line is carefully coiled in a whaling bucket in the forward part of the boat. To use the tackle the assistance of the experienced, quick-eyed, and resourceful local fishermen is essential. On a bright day it is not difficult to find the fish.

They are often seen sailing about with their back fins and parts of their broad sides above the water. Sometimes they are in playful mood, and turn themselves about with a rapid, churning motion, which displays their shining sides to great advantage. Occasionally they have leaping contests, and exhibit their immense silvery brightness, in all its glory, in the sunlight.

The fishermen differ in their theories as to the proper way to approach without disturbing them, some being guided by the direction of the wind, others by the slant of the sun, but they all manage to get up to them if allowed to have their own way about it.

To cast the harpoon properly is not quite so easy as it looks. The professional imparts a quivering kind of motion to it as it leaves his hand, and sinks it into the back of the fish up to the hinge, more than half way up the iron.

No one who knows the tarpon will have any doubt as to his attitude henceforth. He intends to fight the fight of his life from that time on.

Sometimes, while cruising about waiting for the big fellows to show themselves, a school of bluefish are encountered. As these, though rather dry, are considered fair eating, it is not unusual for the harpooner to take a shy at one of them. Though they run up into the hundred-weights and are powerful-looking things, after the first flurry they may be hauled to the boatside easily enough. But it is not so with the tarpon. When he feels the steel he is just as likely as not to jump out of the water a dozen times, or will at once make off for deep water at lightning speed. In either case, the men at the oars row in the same direction, to save line, as there is no knowing how far the stricken fish may travel.

If too much strain is put upon the harpoon, which is purposely made of soft, ductile steel, it may wrench free, leaving the fish to die in helpless misery.

One party last year made fast to a rugged old warrior weighing 240 pounds, which they fought over five miles of water and through five long hours, before he came in on his mighty side and was towed ashore. When near enough to the boat, a slender lance is used to despatch the fish, which otherwise, in spite of appearances, may retain enough strength to break away with vicious speed when shoal water is reached.

The sport is by no means without its spice of danger. A kink in the coiled line is almost as dangerous as in whaling. One old fisherman at Sandy Beach lost his arm through catching it in the bight of a line as a big tarpon was running it out. Another, to get a grip upon the line by which he was holding an exhausted fish his comrade was about to lance, passed it around his hand. The thrust of the steel only lightly pierced the tarpon, which gave a prodigious leap on to the boat, which it overturned, and put such a strain upon the line as to cut the fingers to the bone, crushing them so that amputation was necessary.

There is a case on record of a very large fish towing an exhausted boatload all night long, the approach of day showing land almost out of sight and the fish as vigorously as ever making for the other side of the Atlantic. The wearied fisherman cut their line and let go.

It will be seen that tarpon fishing is no child's play in these waters. Nevertheless, those men of stout nerve and fair strength who are anxious to experience a new excitement might do worse than endeavor to get next to a couple of hundred-weights of tarpon in the invigorating and well-stocked waters of the Bay of Chaleur.

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NO TIME TO LOSE

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TWELVE PAGES

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