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BILLIARDS



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BY

CAPTAIN CRAWLEY.

230°



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BILLIARDS :

ITS

Theory and Practice ;

WITH

THE SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLE OF THE SIDE STROKE,
RULES OF THE VARIOUS GAMES,
HINTS UPON BETTING, LA BAGATELLE, ETC.

BY

CAPTAIN CRAWLEY.

FOURTH EDITION.

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*Illustrated by Thirty-four Diagrams.*  
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**WILLIAM HENRY COX,
5, GREAT QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.**



TO
My Friend and Biographer,
WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY,
PRINCE OF NOVELISTS,
MOST GENIAL OF WITS,
AND
STEADIEST OF BILLIARD PLAYERS,
This Little Book
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,
BY
HIS QUONDAM FRIEND AND GODSON,
RAWDON CRAWLEY.

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PREFACE

TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

I AM not a vain man, nor an obstinate man, though some of my friends persist in declaring that I am a proud man. Well, I really am proud to find my little book in a Fourth Edition, and, if I had a particle of vanity in my composition, that quality would be, to say the least of it, flattered. "There *is* something in Crawley's book, after all," I overheard the Right Honourable Edward Elphinstone Macer observe to Lord Tomnoddy, in the washing-place attached to the billiard-room of the Megatherium. Well, certainly there must be something in it, for the public have fully endorsed my right honourable friend's opinion; and so long as they continue so to think, so long shall I be happy in believing that my treatise on Billiards has not been without its use in assisting young players, and affording a hint or two to old hands. *Au reste*; or I shall be getting egotistical.

R. C.

Bedford Hotel, Brighton.

PREFACE

TO THE THIRD EDITION.

I HAVE been requested by my excellent publisher to write a Preface to a Third Edition, and to revise my little book for publication. What can I say in reply? Why, merely, that in reading over the sheets for press, I have found it necessary to do no more than correct a single error, in which the printer, in the Second Edition, made me trip in my Latin. And yet there *is* something more. I find that some half dozen impertinent fellows have severally laid claim to the authorship of this treatise on Billiards; and one man—an Irishman—has absolutely stolen my title, and plagiarised my design. His production is, however, so utterly contemptible that my publisher has not considered it worth his while to interdict its sale. There are some

creatures so insignificant that, even if you tread upon them, they crawl from under your foot.

Having warned my readers of these petty thieves, who, failing to steal my purse, have tried to rob me of my good name, and have failed also in *that* laudable endeavour, I commend this Third Edition to the patronage of all gentlemen billiard players.

And subscribe myself,

Their obedient Servant,

RAWDON CRAWLEY.

Megatherium Club,
Christmas, 1858.

P R E F A C E

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

DEAR PUBLIC,

Nearly all the members of the Megatherium Club are good billiard players ; a circumstance easily accounted for, when I tell you that they have most of them been taught the noble game by—or at least have immensely improved in their play in consequence of losing numerous games with—your humble servant. But, like good generous fellows as they are, they were anxious that the light they profited by should be more widely diffused. “Why not write a book upon billiards, Crawley?” says the Right Honourable Edward Elphinstone Macer to me one day. He had earned the right of addressing me in this familiar way by having been my opponent at pyramids, often, with the usual result. I did not catch at the suggestion directly—or, at least, I did not seem to do so—but I began to think from that time that my right

honourable friend was really a rather clever fellow. Other of the members also pressed me on the subject, so that one afternoon—I had won a good deal, I recollect—I condescendingly said I would think about it. I did think about it, and the result of my cogitations was the determination to give my experiences to the public. The next point was to settle on the medium through which I could most conveniently address my audience. Some suggested the *Times*, but that paper was voted too political; others the *Athenæum*, but that was thought too literary; my little friend Deuceace named the *Morning Advertiser*, but that paper was scouted at once as too public-housey; another thought of *Bell's Life*, but Macer's objection to that was, that no gentleman read it—a perfectly aristocratic blunder, easily excusable in a man like my right honourable friend; the *Sunday Times* was named, but that was declared too theatrical; the *Era* wouldn't do, because of its generally loose tone; nor the *Leader*, because of its Radicalism; the *Illustrated London News* was for some time in favour, but it was at last discovered that it patronised ladies' fashions, antiquarians, and small poets. At length, after running through the list of London papers—as given in “Mit-

chell's Newspaper Directory"—it was decided *nem. con.* that the *Field*, being a gentleman's paper, was the only proper field for my lucubrations. Negotiations with the editors were immediately opened by the Honourable Tom Tiddy, who knows all the editors and newspaper writers; and honourable terms having been agreed on, my sixteen chapters on billiards duly appeared in the pages of that excellent journal. This is, briefly, the history of the following book; which, with the exception of some additions, improvements, corrections, and omissions, is, more or less, identically a reprint of those chapters on billiards which created such a *furor* among the players when they appeared in the *Field*. That my book has already become celebrated in its serial form is no reason why its ten thousand edition should not be speedily sold and a new one printed—but quite the reverse. In conclusion, dear public, let me modestly and truthfully declare that you can never become adepts in the noble game of billiards till you have bought and read it; and buy you will, and read it you must. *Au revoir.*

R. C.

Megatherium Club,
Christmas, 1856.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

FOR an author there can be no more flattering proof of public estimation, than a call for a Second Edition. My publisher has just written to me, requesting me to read through my little book, with a view to any corrections or alterations I might think, necessary for a Second Edition. When his note reached me I was in the grand stand at the Chester races; but I hurried home to my hotel, as soon as the race for the Cup was decided, determined to make a thorough revision of the work. I have read it through, carefully, and I confess that I have found occasion to make but few alterations or additions to my previous opinions, with regard to the noble game of Billiards. Since the First Edition went to press, death has removed one fine player, young Cornelius; and fortune, or the pursuit of it, has carried another, "Joe," of Old 'Change, to Australia. Several little statements of facts have become ob-

solete, and some small matters of opinion I have thought fit to modify : but in the main, the book is just what it was at Christmas last, when I gave the original "copy" into the hands of the printer. I am proud to say that it has been extremely well received by "the press and the public:" and I hope yet to have to write a Preface to a Third Edition.

Queen's Hotel, Manchester,
June 1st, 1857.

BILLIARDS:

ITS

THEORY AND PRACTICE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

OF all in-door amusements, commend us to billiards. "Let us to billiards, Charmian," cries Cleopatra, in the absence of her beloved Antony. We admire the taste of the lady, though we doubt whether the noble game was among the regular recreations of the Egyptian court; indeed, we fancy that the precise period of its invention is not certainly known. I have been told that the Chinese lay claim to the possession of a game similar to billiards; but never having been in China, I cannot vouch for the truth of the story. Its introduction into British India and the Australian Islands is certainly due to British enterprise. All the knowledge we possess of its introduction is, that it was probably invented by the Dutch, from whom the French, the Germans, and the Italians soon learned it,

and that it presently afterwards found its way into our own tight little island. The time of its first appearance in England is doubtful; but as it is mentioned by Shakspeare, it must at least have been known as a fashionable amusement in the middle of the sixteenth century. This, however, by the way. What we have to do is, not to trace the *history* of billiards, but to teach its *practice* scientifically.

To return, billiards is, as I said, the first of in-door games. Chess is a capital game, but it is a sedentary one, and affords rather an *exercise* than an *amusement* to the mind. Cards lead to gambling; and as to draughts, dominoes, backgammon, &c., they are of too slight a character to engage the attention for any length of time. Billiards may be reckoned as a science, the practice of which not only improves and strengthens the mind, but gives tone and vigour to the body. A good active player walks about two miles an hour round and about the table. The act of striking the ball provides exercise for the arms, opens the chest, and compels a certain degree of motion in all parts of the body. In fact, I know of only two instruments the use of which brings all the muscles into play, and they are the spade and the billiard cue. In my youthful days I was in the habit of visiting the country house of a wealthy baronet. He was a man who enjoyed life to the full: hunting, fishing, racing, cricketing, each in its proper season enjoyed his patronage. I used really to envy him, though he was some twenty years my senior, he was such

a splendid fellow. But in his cup of sweet there was a drop of bitterness: there always is, I suppose, just to keep down our pride, and to remind us that we are poor weak creatures. My friend had an only daughter, who, from the effect of a fall in her infancy—those precious nurses! always looking after red coats instead of their baby charges!—had contracted a high shoulder, which proved a real deformity as the young lady approached womanhood. Her father had taken advice, of course; but the only specific his medical friends could recommend was exercise! Well, the young lady rode, and danced, and walked, and ran, and played with the skipping rope, and used the dumb-bells, till she grew rosy-faced and plump; but the high shoulder did not show any symptoms of abating, and looked, indeed, all the more conspicuous by contrast with her pretty face and otherwise handsome person. One autumn I went down, as usual, and took with me a fine young fellow who was studying medicine. As soon as he saw the young lady he instantly did her the honour of falling in love with her; which compliment she repaid in a most gracious manner—rather to my annoyance. Well, one day we were talking in the library—the baronet, my friend, and I—when the subject of the young lady's unfortunate deformity (for so her father would insist on calling it) came upon the *tapis*. "Now look here, Sir Harry," said my friend; "you have tried all sorts of remedies, but none of them touch the part affected. Riding and walking are excellent kinds of exercise, but they

don't bring the right muscles into action. The dumb-bells do, I confess; but then they tire the young lady without interesting her. What we want is to combine exercise with amusement. Let me recommend billiards." The baronet was a wise man, and was not above taking extra-official advice, even from his daughter's admirer; so he quietly set about erecting a billiard room. In about three months an old stable was converted into a handsome apartment, elegantly fitted up with a regular first-rate Thurston table, cues, balls, and marking board, all complete. My friend taught the young lady to play, and, of course, she soon became proficient under such a tutor. In less than a year the deformity was so far reduced as to be scarcely perceptible, and very soon after she became so good a billiard player as to actually beat her master, whom she eventually rewarded by marrying off-hand, to the great disgust of all the red coats, to say nothing of the black coats, in the field and neighbourhood.

I have introduced this anecdote— which is strictly true— simply as an evidence of the healthfulness of the game of billiards. Now, however, we will proceed to our proper business. Of course, all my readers are acquainted with the form of a billiard table. In England the tables used in the clubs and public rooms are always twelve feet long by six wide, *inside the cushions*; but smaller tables, from six feet and upwards in length, are occasionally made to suit private players and small apartments. The established table is made of stout oak, mahogany, or other

wood, has a slate bed, covered with fine green cloth, and rests on eight legs; with an elastic cushion all round, intersected by six pockets—one at each corner and one in the centre of each side cushion. The cushions are now almost universally made of vulcanized India-rubber, though many of the old players say that the stroke is more certain from the old stuffed list cushions. Three spots will be found on all good tables—one in the direct centre between the two middle pockets; another, the *winning spot*, occupying a position at the upper end of the table, two feet six inches from the cushion; and the third a distance of thirteen inches from the cushion. This is called *the spot*, as it is used in the more common of the English games, the winning and losing game, on which to place the red ball at starting. The *baulk line* is situated at the lower end of the table, and is, or ought to be, exactly two feet six inches from the cushion. From the centre of the baulk line is struck a semicircle of ten inches radius, in the centre and at the two ends of which are usually placed smaller spots. From any part of this semicircle the player commences, in all English games; but, in the American and Russian games, he is allowed to place his ball anywhere within the baulk line. All first-class tables are about three feet high, with pocket openings of from three inches and an eighth to three inches and a half in width. The pockets should be deep enough to contain at least five balls, and the table should be perfectly level. A ground floor is the best for a billiard room, as

the floors of modern houses are apt to vibrate, In Paris and other continental cities they play the Canon game upon smaller tables without pockets; but the real scientific game is only played in England and America, though many foreigners are very excellent handlers of the cue—as you will probably find, to your cost, if you play, for money, in Paris, Berlin, or the German watering places.

Having said thus much for the benefit of my amateur readers—I shall get scientific enough by and by—let me say a word or two about the balls and cues. The regular size of the ivory balls used for match games in England is two inches in diameter; but smaller or larger balls are in common use for the Canon game, Pyramids, and some other games I shall have to mention. The ball should be perfectly round, without the slightest tendency to roll one or other way by reason of imperfect gravity. A badly-weighted ball is soon discovered on a good table. If the ball be struck fairly in the centre from the middle of the baulk, it will return from the top cushion to the spot from which it was delivered; but, of course, if it be not struck directly in the centre it will have a tendency to diverge either to the right or the left on its return. A little practice will soon enable the player to discover a true from an imperfect ball. All the balls used in the game should be of precisely similar weight and size. Great attention is paid to this matter by the makers of modern billiard balls.

With regard to the cue, it should be of mode-

rate weight, well balanced, so that the portion behind the hand is about the same weight as that in front, and of such a height as that it may *stand upright beneath the chin of the player*. This last rule will be found of great advantage to a young player, as the use of too long or too short a cue is apt to cramp the free exercise of the arm in making the stroke. The leather *tip* of the cue should be flat for the ordinary winning and losing game, and not more than three-eighths of an inch in diameter; though, of course, much depends on the taste of the player. A round-tipped cue, well and evenly chalked, is necessary in making the side stroke—of which more hereafter. I have seen cues elaborately ornamented with inlaid coloured woods and so on, but that is only folly and expense. The best cues are made plain, of well-seasoned ash, gently tapering from the butt to the tip; the broad end should have one side slightly flattened, so as to lay well and evenly on the table when required to be used as a mace. The mace, by the way, is seldom or never used by the present generation of billiard players. The *weight* of the cue is entirely a matter of taste.

Before the tyro commences playing, he should have learned to make a good firm *bridge*, with the fingers well set together, and the thumb not too wide from the forefinger, keeping the fingers straight and the knuckles well up. The hand should rest evenly and firmly on the wrist and tips of the fingers, and care should be taken that too great a distance is not kept between the bridge and the cue hand. Many an amateur fails in

becoming a player from inattention to these little matters at starting. From six to nine inches is a good striking distance. In making a canon or losing hazard, the cue should be held lightly between the thumb and fingers of the right hand; but for the straight winning hazard the cue should be grasped firmly in the hand, and the ball struck fair in the centre. Of course, much of the amateur's success will depend on how far he understands and conquers the theory of the game before he begins to play.

Having made a good bridge, the next point to be attained is how to strike the opposing ball in a fair, full, and even manner—the side and oblique strokes will come after. The best way to accomplish this is to play, at first with two balls, striking one against the other fairly, and with such strength as to bring the ball struck back into the baulk. Good practice also may be had with a single ball, by which the angles of the table will be acquired, recollecting that *the angle of reflection is always equal to the angle of incidence*. That is to say, that if a ball be struck from one corner of the baulk against the centre of the top cushion, it will return to the spot at the other side of the semicircle, and with the baulk line complete a triangle, the two legs of which equal each other in length and direction; and so on throughout all the angles of the table. Of course this law varies with the sharpness of the stroke, the height at which the ball is struck, the variation from the centre of the ball struck, and so on.

I shall conclude this chapter with a few general observations, which it will be useful for *all players to remember*.

Never hesitate about your stroke, nor see-saw up and down with your cue while making it. Get your sight, and make your stroke at once.

Deliver your cue *from the shoulder, and not from the elbow*, making the stroke by one free, direct, and certain impulse, without hesitation, doubt, or fear. There are strokes, however, which require to be made from under the cushion; in which cases, shorten your cue and strike firmly.

Learn to deliver your ball with a moderate degree of strength: a very hard stroke defeats its own purpose, and breaks through the regular angles of the table, while a too slow stroke frequently leaves your own ball in danger. Strike your ball, but do not push it.

Stand firmly upon your legs, with (for a right-handed-player) the left foot a little advanced; and bend your body rather than your knees. An ungraceful position begets ungraceful and variable play.

Do not attempt difficult strokes without having previously practised them, as such play is very likely to leave you in danger.

Discover the strength of the table before playing. This you may do by an experimental stroke or two. Good elastic cushions will carry the ball at least thrice up and down the table.

Do not disturb yourself about the state of the score; that is the marker's business.

It is not considered the gentlemanly game to pocket the *white* except the *red* be in baulk, or when a two-stroke will end the game.

Recollect that *from the marker's decision there is no appeal.*

Never volunteer remarks about another man's game, nor interfere unless your opinion is requested. Idle talking begets bad play.

Listen for the stroke before entering a room in which a game is being played.

Lastly, and most important of all—KEEP YOUR TEMPER.



CHAPTER II.

THE ANGLES OF THE TABLE—TERMS USED IN THE GAME.

ALWAYS remembering that *the angle of reflection equals the angle of incidence*, the very first and best practice for the beginner is to conquer what is called the Angles of the Table. Of course it must be understood, once for all, that I am not writing for professional, or even for good amateur players. The purpose of this little book is simply to provide advice and assistance for the novice; as we proceed we shall find it necessary to go somewhat more deeply into the subject, and to illustrate our remarks by means of diagrams. But, *revenons à nos moutons*: as soon as you have acquired facility in using the cue, striking the ball smoothly and fairly from the shoulder, then it will be well to practise with a *single* ball. Commencing from the baulk, the ball should be struck against the opposite cushion in various places, with such a moderate degree of strength as to bring it well back again. Observe now that the angles made by the returning ball will be in every case the exact counterpart or reverse of the direction assumed by the original stroke; and this, too, through as many reflections of the original angle as the ball can be made to travel up and down and across the table. I am assuming that your ball be struck full and fair in the centre. A ball struck out of the centre,

more or less on the right or left side, will, on reaching the cushion, take a sharper or more or less acute angle. This is, in fact, the whole secret of the *side stroke*: many good players practise it daily, but are altogether ignorant of the scientific causes of its effects. The blow struck on the *side* of the ball *does not take full effect* in giving it particular direction till it reaches the cushion, or comes into contact with another ball. The great mistake of young players is to put side on a ball when there is little or no occasion for it. There is no greater accomplishment for a billiard player, on a billiard table, than a perfect knowledge of the side stroke; but in no part of billiards is there so much empirical practice and want of real knowledge. But of this more by and by; let us keep for the present to our angles.

Anything that is worth learning at all, is worth learning thoroughly; and a man to call himself a billiard player, merely because he can make hazards and canons, is as much a pretence as one who calls himself a scholar, merely because he has learned a few dictionary quotations in foreign languages. To understand the moves at chess is not to be a chess player; so neither does the knack of knocking about the balls constitute a billiard player.

A little practice with a single ball will soon bring the student into acquaintance with all the principal angles. A very good plan to proceed upon is to make a small chalk spot on the top or side cushion, and strike at it repeatedly with

various degrees of strength, first from one and then from the other side of the angle. In this way the truth of your stroke will be proved, and you will discover how the different strengths and sides given to your ball affect the angles produced. In most modern tables, the cushions are of vulcanized India-rubber; but as the strengths of the cushions vary, so it will be found that the angles produced on different tables also slightly vary, but not sufficiently so to materially influence your stroke or game. You will soon discover also that very hard hitting rather defeats than forwards your object; a smooth, well-delivered ball being, in the majority of cases, the most advantageous. Two or three hours' practice with a single ball will, if pursued in the spirit of a true student, have sufficiently acquainted you with the action of the ball and the course of the angles as to render your next step of comparatively easy accomplishment.

Now take two other balls, the white and red, and, placing them in the line of the angles observed, endeavour to produce the various canons that lie within those angles. As soon as you have acquired a little intimacy with the more common canons (carambole is the correct term, but it is seldom used in England now-a-days), you can increase or decrease the distance between the balls, and so vary your practice *ad infinitum*. Of course I need scarcely say that the number of angles on the table are countless; but having once conquered the principle, and acquired the knowledge that the return ball is the counter-

part of the original stroke—or, in other words, that *the angle of reflection is the reverse of the angle of incidence*, an axiom never to be forgotten or neglected—you will have crossed that *pons asinorum* which many amateurs at billiards never attempt.

You may next try simple hazards, still bearing in mind the grand axiom, which differs in no way from the practice with a single ball, except in so far as the ball is struck higher or lower, stronger or more slowly, on one side or the other. In my next chapter I shall explain how a ball, divided by imaginary lines across its surface, may be struck so as to insure certain determinate results; now, however, and before we go farther, it will be as well to explain certain terms in general use in all games of billiards.

The *Hazard* is, in fact, any stroke made with the point of the cue; but the term is now only applied to a stroke in which a ball is played into a pocket. The *Winning Hazard* is one in which the object ball is struck with your own ball and sent into a pocket; the *Losing Hazard* is a stroke in which the striker's ball is pocketed from off, or after contact with, another.

The *Canon* (or carambole, as it was formerly called) is produced by a very simple means apparently, though a little practice will soon convince a learner that there is a great deal to learn in the science of canons. To make a canon, you must strike *with your own ball* two others successively; the stroke may be made either direct from one ball to another, or after contact

with the cushion. Some players have acquired great fame by canons made by striking several cushions—all round the table, as it is called. Mr. Kentfield (the celebrated Jonathan, of Brighton) has a very excellent canon of his own, which he makes when both the balls are within the baulk line, and at opposite sides of the table. Mr. Roberts, of Manchester, the prince of billiard players, is also famous for his canons; and “Pat,” the marker at Goode’s, on Ludgate-hill, reckons the great strength of his very fine game mainly by the certainty and complication of his canons. I have frequently scored twenty consecutive canons in one break. The great secret of success in making canons from the cushion lies in a perfect knowledge of the angles of the table.

The *High Stroke* is produced by striking the ball above its centre. It has the effect of making the ball travel much faster than the centre stroke. By it is produced

The *Following Stroke*, a most useful stroke in the English and canon games. It is made by striking your ball high, and allowing your arm to *flow*, as it were, after the cue—a sort of rapid pushing stroke.

The *Full Centre Stroke* has the effect of forcing the object in the same line as the striking ball, and is used in making the winning hazard, especially when it is important to pocket both balls.

The *Slow Stroke* is useful in keeping the balls together, so as to leave another hazard or canon after the first score has been effected. It is

generally much more effective in the hands of a good player than a swiftly-delivered ball.

A *Miss* is given when you fail to hit your own or the object ball, or when you place your own ball in a position of safety, if there be no immediate or certain stroke on the table. When the *Miss* is given purposely, it should always be made with the point of the cue, or with the thick end of your own cue, or the *butt*; never with the hand alone or the side of the cue. Many players make the *Miss* from beyond and into the baulk with the side of the cue, but the opponent may always insist on the stroke being made with the point. It is not considered fair to stop a ball in giving a *Miss*.

A *Coup* is made either when you run your own ball accidentally, or purposely, into a pocket, without first coming into contact with another ball, or when you force it off the table without striking another ball.

The *Low Stroke* has the effect of retarding or altogether stopping the progress of the ball struck when it reaches the object ball, or the cushion. It is produced by striking the ball below its centre. By it we get

The *Screw or Twist*, which has the effect of bringing the ball back again after contact with the object ball. It is made by striking your ball very low, with a sort of jerk only to be acquired by practice.

The *Object Ball* is the ball struck *at* with your own. The *Striker's Ball* is the ball played *with*.

The *Side Stroke*, as I have already explained,

is produced by striking your own ball more or less on the right or left side, according as you wish it to take a right or left angle after contact with the cushion or another ball. It is an axiom with players that the ball must be struck *on the side it is intended to go*; but, as I shall have occasion to show by and by, this is not an infallible law—many cases arising where it is advisable to use the *reverse side* in order to produce the effect otherwise producible by the ordinary or regular *Side Stroke*.

To properly make the side stroke, your cue must slightly slide on to the ball struck, which will have the effect of reversing its mode of progression, so that, instead of its travelling over and over, it goes forward by a series of slow under and under and under revolutions. Of this I shall have more to say by and by.

The *Jenny* is one of the most artistic as well as one of the easiest strokes. It is made by a losing hazard into the middle pocket from a ball lying near to the cushion, and about a foot from the pocket. I have known some players make five, six, and even eight of these Jenny strokes consecutively off the red ball. On a very fast table, however, it is nearly impossible to make a second Jenny, as the rebound from the cushion carries the object ball too far towards the centre of the table, however fine the stroke be played; but then there is generally a losing hazard left by the ordinary angle *inside* the object ball.

The *Pair of Breeches* occurs where the object ball lies on or near the centre of the upper end

of the table above the centre pockets from baulk, or *vice versâ*. A half ball well played will lodge a ball in each of the top pockets. The *Breeches* is a good stroke to play for practice. I have seen Mr. George Davis, of Smithfield, accomplish this stroke five times running. It is not always found advantageous, however, to play this stroke when a canon would be left were the losing hazard simply made. The *power* of making the stroke when it presents itself is, notwithstanding, frequently of great advantage to the player.

The *Doublet* (or Double) is produced by striking your own or the object ball against one of the cushions, so as to make it rebound to an opposite pocket or ball. Striking two cushions by a double reflection is usually called a Double Double. It is a very useful stroke to know, especially in the winning hazard games, and every player should be able to make it when it presents itself. Of course, I do not mean to say that such a degree of dexterity is ever attainable as to make every stroke a certainty; all I want to impress upon the reader is, that, in billiards, certain principles once known cannot fail to be useful to him. In this stroke the ball may be made to reflect its original line of impetus with more or less acuteness, according to the strength with which it is struck, the place where the object ball is divided, the degree of side given to it, &c.

Cramp Games are those which are played out of the usual course, as when a player gives five pockets to one, stakes his hazard against his adversary's canons and hazards, and so on. They

are usually employed by a player against an amateur, when a smaller number of points are scored.

On all these points I shall have more to say as we go on. I shall also illustrate my future remarks by such diagrams as are necessary to the elucidation of my meaning; and it will be my endeavour to give to each game the true rules, as observed in the principal clubs and public rooms in London and the provinces. If you attend to my instructions you will not be likely to play *à tort et à travers*—which, being translated into elegant English, means *making a mull of it*.

CHAPTER III.

DIVISION OF THE BALLS—WINNING AND
LOSING HAZARDS.

I SAID in my first chapter that the game of Billiards was one, the practice of which *improved* the mind. Now let me prove my words. Any one may knock the balls about on the table; but it is not everyone who arrives at the *why* and *wherefore* of his strokes; and, without the true principles of the game be thoroughly understood, no man can become a really good player. Some men I know who can play tolerably good games, making the usual winning and losing hazards with some degree of success, and even winning money sometimes. But as soon as such men get opposed to really scientific players, they lose all confidence, get nervous, and complain that they are "out of play to night." The reason is, that they have never got over the alphabet of the game. They play empirically, and therefore science beats them, as a matter of course. It is my desire to so instruct my readers that they shall be able to avoid the errors into which beginners almost invariably fall. I have won and lost hundreds at the game, and the result of my experience may be summed up in a single sentence:—Practice *without* scientific knowledge *may* succeed; but practice *united* to science *must* win.

I presume that by this time you have acquired a tolerably good command over your ball; that

you have become so far acquainted with the angles of the table as to know about where your ball will be likely to stop, and that you have learned to make the ordinary direct canons and hazards. But you have yet much to learn before you are master of your own ball. Taking this

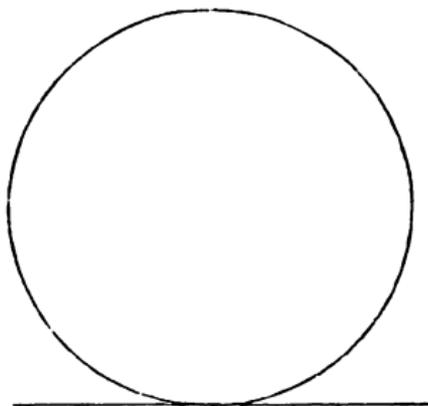


Fig 1

to be your ball, and the line beneath it to be the table, you are enabled to strike any portion of its surface except that immediately in contact with the table, your eye being on a level with the cushion. This and the other figures introduced I have purposely drawn without shading, so that nothing may interfere with the rules I shall attempt to lay down. Now draw an imaginary line across the centre of the ball, and strike at the dot at the side. This will give a free, full impulse to the ball's direction. If you strike above this line, your ball will travel swiftly. In making the high stroke, you must let your arm follow the cue; not by a push, but by a single

decided impulse, striking always from the shoulder rather than from the elbow, if the

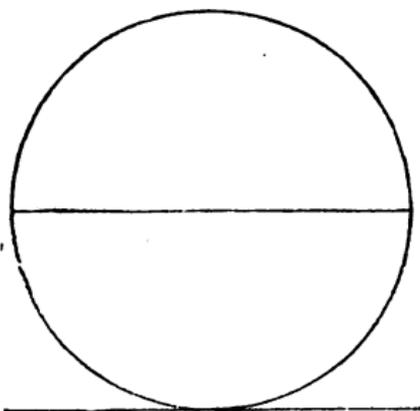


Fig 2

striking ball be sufficiently distant from the cushion. If you strike below the centre, the stroke will have a tendency to retard the ball ; lower still, the ball will stop ; and at the lowest, the ball will return to the cue's point. The next diagram will more fully explain my meaning.

Struck at 1, the ball will travel at its fastest, consistently with the force applied, following straight from the point struck ; at 2 the same effect with moderate swiftness ; at 3, your ball will still travel direct to its object, but less swiftly than before ; struck in the centre, you know the effect. Now take the lower figures : struck, with the same degree of strength as before, at 4, its progress will be retarded ; at 5, it will stop at the point struck ; and at 6, it will return to the player with more or less swiftness, according to the force and precision of the stroke. The two

latter strokes must be accompanied by a sudden drawing back of the hand—an action not alto-

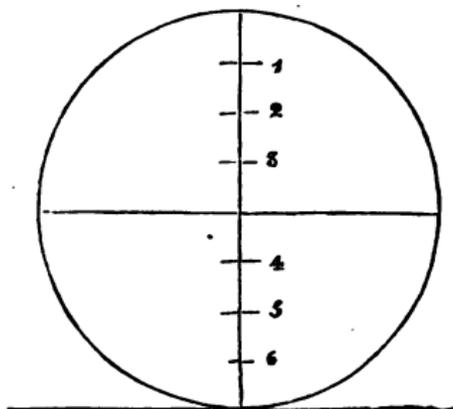


Fig. 3

gether explainable on paper, but which is easily acquired when once seen performed by a good player. All these effects may be produced with precisely the same degree of strength. A ball struck at the same heights as indicated in Fig. 3, a little to the right or left, will produce a corresponding inclination to the right or left on reaching the cushion or another ball: but to the principle of the *side stroke* I must devote an entire chapter. For the present, therefore, we will pursue the plain game, and strike our ball in the centre of its diameter, higher or lower, according to the effect desired.

It will now be necessary to explain how certain effects are produced by dividing, not your own, but the *object* ball.

In taking aim at an object ball, it is usual, and indeed necessary, in order to give particular

effect to the stroke, that particular portions of it should be struck. *Par exemple*, you wish to make either of the *Losing Hazards* shown in Fig. 9; now, not one of the strokes there shown could be made by striking your own ball full upon the centre of the object ball; the same also with the *Winning Hazards* in Fig. 10. What we do, there-

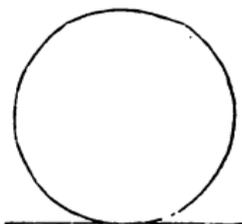


Fig 4

fore, is to divide the object ball into imaginary parts. If a full ball is requisite, you strike your own ball so that its centre meets the centre of the object ball, or nearly. Of course the impetus given to the object ball will be the same as that originally applied to the striker's; this is what is call a *Straight Stroke*. If you wish to make the other hazards, you must strike the object in such a way as to make the angle from it more or less acute. A *Half Ball*, a *Three-quarter Ball*, an *Eighth* or *Fine Ball*, and so on, must be struck so that the point of deflection carries your ball in the direction intended. By studying the diagrams and practising them upon the table, however, much more will be learned than can be explained on paper; you will do well to get a few hours' instruction from an intelligent marker. Mr. Richards, the proprietor of the rooms in

Old 'Change, or the marker at Stebbings', Turn-wheel-lane, Cannon-street, are both good players, and are happy to give instruction in the daytime.

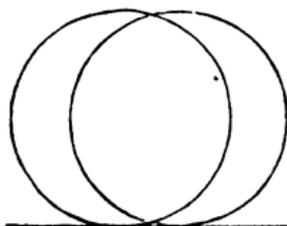


Fig 5

They are both civil fellows; their charge, I think, is half a crown an hour, which includes the tables. Figures 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, show the points of contact for the *full, three-quarter, half-quarter, and fine* balls.

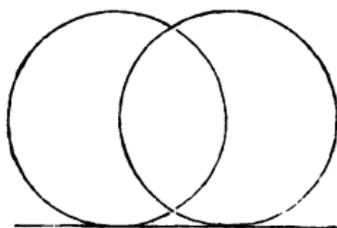


Fig 6

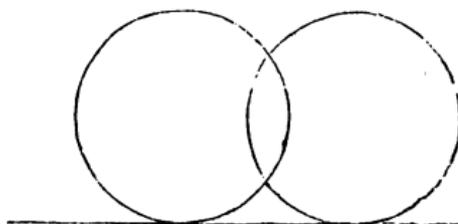


Fig 7

D

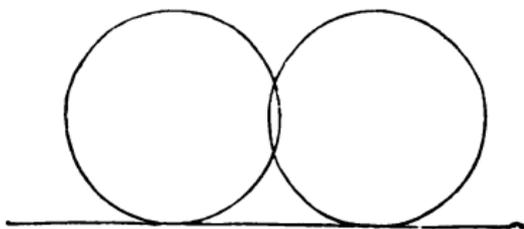


Fig 8

FIG. 4, the *Full Ball*, where the striker's ball meets or covers the object ball directly full—the cue should be grasped tightly in the hand, not held loosely between the fingers, as for the losing hazard ; FIG. 5, a *Three-quarter Ball*, where the one ball touches or covers about three-fourths of the other ; FIG. 6, a *Half Ball*, in which the striking ball covers about half the object ball ; FIG. 7, a *Quarter Ball*, in which the contact is slight ; FIG. 8, a *Fine Ball*, in which the striker's ball comes in contact with the other just sufficiently to touch it in passing. The learner should practise all these strokes with a marker, if possible.

In all these cases, *your own ball* must be struck full in the centre. The motion of the striking ball, after contact with the object ball, will, it must be remembered, always be modified by the strength of the stroke, the height at which you strike, and the distance you diverge on either side from the direct centre of your own or the object ball. In proportion as the contact of the balls is more or less full, so will the reflection of the stroke be more or less in the direction of the original line of incidents. Mr. Kentfield has divided the striker's ball into seventeen points ; but I doubt whether anyone could ever acquire such extreme dexterity as to strike each of the points indicated at pleasure.

What I have now shown is the ordinary manner of striking at the object ball ; and it *must* be acquired before you attempt the side

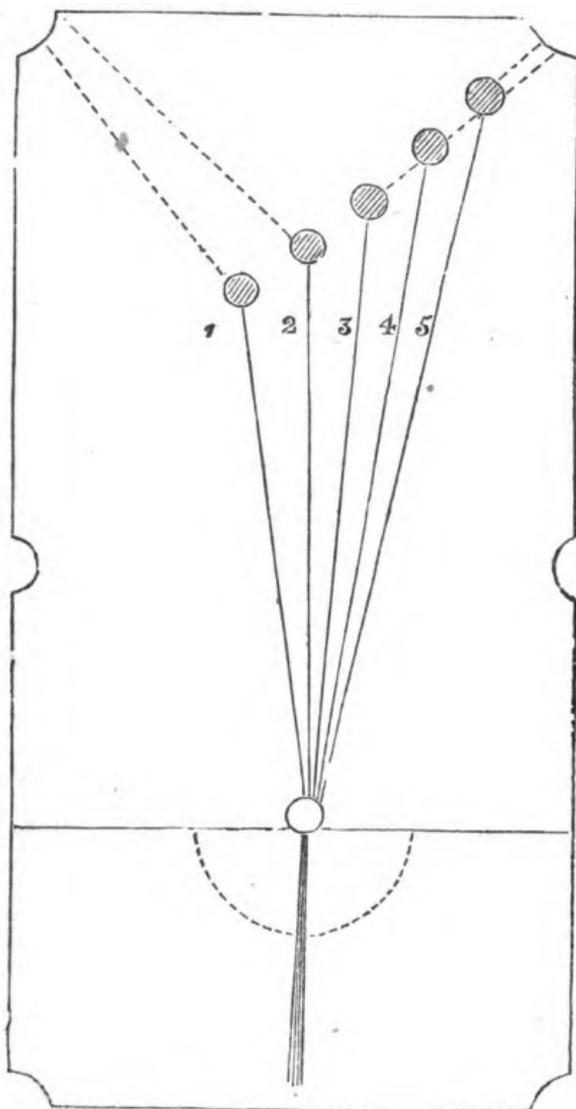


Fig. 9

LOSING HAZARDS.—1, a quarter ball; 2, a half ball; 3, a three-quarter ball; 4, a quarter ball; 5, a fine ball.

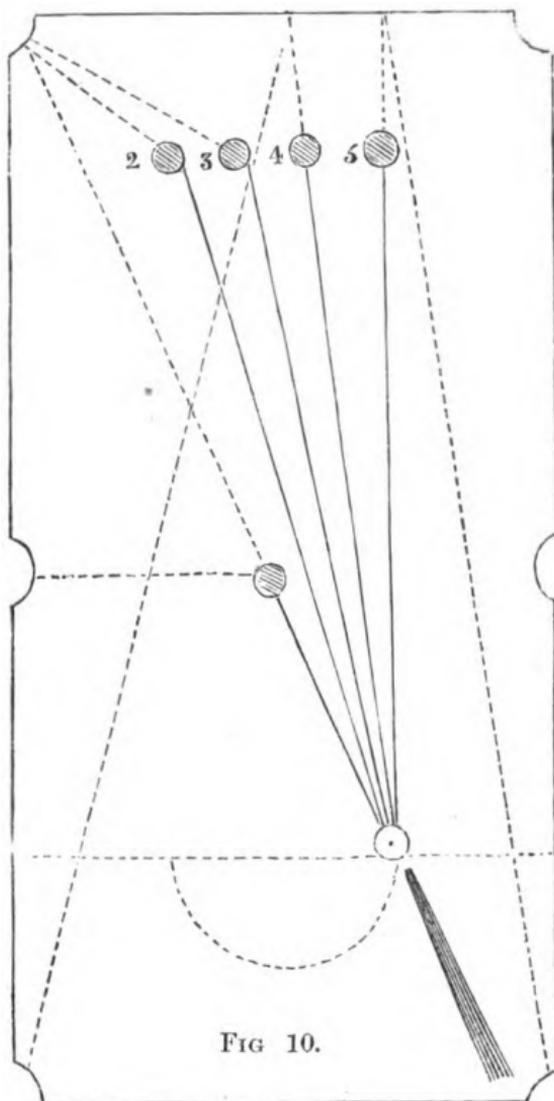


FIG 10.

WINNING HAZARDS.—1, a full ball for the corner pocket, or the object ball, if struck on the extreme right side, would double into the middle; 2, a three-quarter ball; 3, a half ball; 4, a nearly full ball for the double in the left hand corner; 5, nearly full for the other corner.

stroke. In my next chapter I shall give some other diagrams of strokes to be made with the ordinary full ball, and the rules for playing the English (or winning and losing hazard and canon) game. Let me conclude with an anecdote.

I was one evening playing a match game with a fine player in one of the rooms of the Army and Navy Club. The game was a thousand up. My score stood at 760, and my opponent's at about 400. I felt confident of winning, and backed myself to a large amount. I seemed to be able to make every hazard and canon I played for, and felt no small gratification as I listened to the murmurs of admiration that every now and then rose from the lookers on. Presently my opponent missed his stroke, leaving the red ball just over one of the middle pockets. The game was before me. There was a certain score of at least a dozen off the red; but to show my skill, and prompted by vanity, I attempted a difficult canon off the white—and *missed it*. My opponent then played at the red, and scored, and went on scoring; and, in short, very soon won the game. I lost my money; but I gained a piece of wisdom as compensation. Here it is—take it to heart: *Never neglect a present good for a future benefit; for an opportunity once lost can never be recovered.*

CHAPTER IV.

HAZARDS AND CANONS—RULES OF THE
ENGLISH GAME.

MY friend and biographer, Michael Angelo Titmarsh, Esq., of the Middle Temple, Barrister-at-law, has already acquainted the world with my skill at billiards, and I have now much pleasure in making public the fact that he is himself almost as dexterous with the cue as he is with the pen. I taught him, in fact, all he knows about the noble game; so that, in thus bearing testimony to his talents, I am paying myself a sort of left-handed compliment. Well, once when we were playing a little match at the Megatherium Club (my old friend Pam was keeping score—he was a sharp, active fellow then, though he is but a winking old driveller now; I suppose the cares of office have affected his nerves), a position of the balls arose similar to that marked 1 in the following diagram. I made a losing hazard into the middle pocket, brought the red back again from the top cushion to about the same place, and from that break scored seventy-five right away.

Now, I may as well tell you, once for all, that the success of any man's game does not depend so much on the making of any peculiarly difficult strokes as on the keeping the balls well together, so that a succession of hazards and canons may be made. In order to accomplish this, the player should accustom himself to make the common

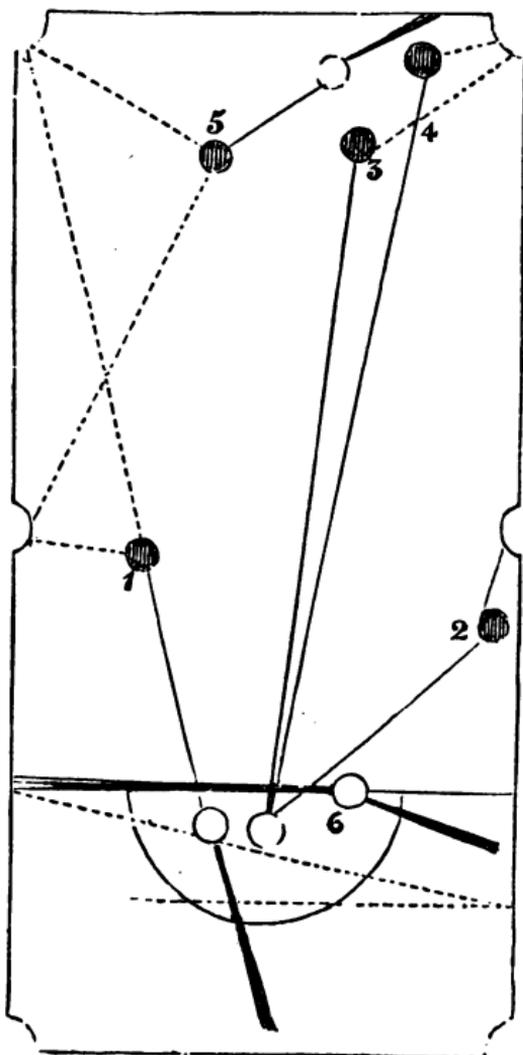


FIG. 11.—COMMON HAZARDS.

1, losing hazard, and pocket the red; 2, the Jenny; 3, 4, losing hazards; 5, losing hazard, and pocket the red in the centre; 6, keeping the baulk.
 (In all these cases the white is the striker's ball.)

hazards and canons shown in the diagrams, with such strength as to keep the balls before him and within a reasonable distance of each other after the stroke is made. I am aware that only long practice can familiarize the player with the strength of his own play: sometimes he strikes too hard and sometimes too lightly; but attention to the position of the object ball after reverberation from a losing hazard will soon show him that a main element of his success must depend on his placing it so that he may score again. In the game I have just mentioned as having played with my friend Titmarsh, my first stroke scored three, and the red ball coming again to about the same place, so as to leave another losing hazard, I was enabled to make a great score from a very common opening.

It should be borne in mind, too, that there is seldom anything gained from pocketing the white, as only one ball is then left on the table, and your adversary, when it is his turn to play, has the advantage of the baulk. Another great matter to consider is, so to place your ball when in hand as to at once render the stroke as easy as possible, and leave the object ball in such a position as to have another score off it from the baulk. In the Jenny (marked 2 in diagram 11) it is of importance not only to make the stroke intended, but to leave another losing hazard off the same ball. This is accomplished by placing your own ball in the centre of the baulk a little below the line, and playing a high quarter ball upon the red: this will leave the object ball at such a dis-

tance from the middle pocket as to leave an easy losing hazard after. Then, according to the strength with which you play, you can either make another hazard in the centre, as in case 1, or in the right hand corner, as in cases 3 and 4. Again, a position often occurs like that described in case 5, where the red ball is either on the spot or near it, and your own ball lies near the cushion on one or other side of the table. Now both the winning hazard and the doublet are uncertain from such a position; but a three-quarter ball, played with moderate strength, will lodge your ball in the corner, and the red in or near the middle pocket. It is not always the best play to pocket both balls. In the case in point, a losing hazard in the corner, leaving another in the centre, is decidedly best, as it leaves your own game more open. This is a capital stroke for practice, and one that occurs in almost every winning and losing game. In cases 1, 2, 3, and 4, your own ball is to be struck in the centre.

In case 6, diagram 11, we have the first instance of the side stroke. To *keep the baulk* with this stroke, you must strike your ball rather high on the inner side. It is the easiest application of the side stroke I know, and will acquaint you with the nature of this kind of play very readily.

With regard to the canons shown in diagram 12, I have chosen only those which occur most commonly in every game, and which may all be made with a full open stroke on your own ball: numerous others will arise in every game. To

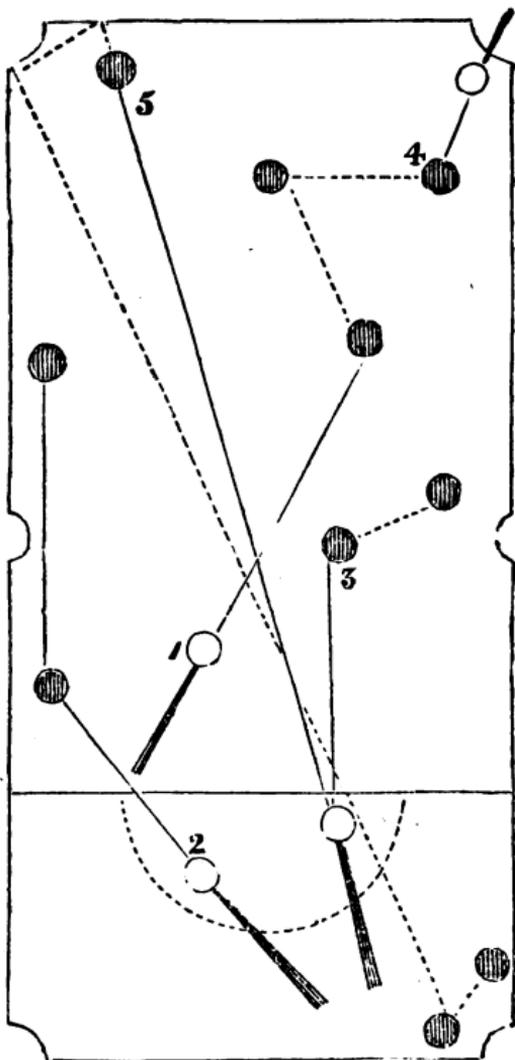


FIG. 12.—COMMON CANONS.

- 1.—A fine ball on the left of the object ball.
- 2.—A fine stroke on the right of the object ball.
- 3.—A low ball full on the object ball.

4.—A low full ball, with a little screw.

5.—A full ball to strike the two cushions, and make a canon on either of the balls within the baulk; or, suppose two balls in baulk, the same effect will be produced by striking a full ball on to the cushion. This is a most useful and safe stroke.

arrive at something like certainty, you should accustom yourself to measure the angle with your eye, and strike at that part of the object ball that appears to render the canon most easy of accomplishment. In my next I shall endeavour to give some instructions on the scientific principle of the side stroke, concluding my present chapter with the rules for that best of all games on the billiard table, the winning or losing canon, or, as it is now more properly called, the English game. These rules are those acknowledged in all the clubs and principal rooms in town and country. The rules are hung on the walls of most billiard rooms; but they are generally very verbose, and not always very clear. I shall endeavour to avoid both faults, and still say all that is necessary.

RULES FOR THE ENGLISH GAME.

1. The winning and losing carambole game is played with three balls, white, spot-white, and red. On commencing the game the red is placed on the spot, and the players string from the baulk circle. The ball that stops nearest to the cushion wins the lead, and gives the choice of balls. When points are given, the player receiving them breaks the balls, either striking the red or giving a miss in baulk.

2. The usual game is fifty up ; but it may be played at any greater or lesser number of points.

3. A miss must in all cases be played with the point of the cue.

4. *In reckoning the points* a white winning or losing hazard scores two ; a red winning or losing hazard, three ; a miss, one ; a coup, three ; pocketing the two white balls, four ; pocketing a white and red ball, five ; a white hazard and canon, four ; a red hazard and canon, five ; pocketing your own and the red ball, six ; your own, the white, and a canon, when the white is first struck, six ; your own, the white, and a canon off the red, seven ; the red, your own, and a canon, eight ; all the balls when the white is first struck, seven ; all the balls when the red is first struck, eight ; all the balls and a canon when the white is first struck, nine ; and when the red is first struck, ten.

5. No ball must be struck till it has done rolling.

6. *All strokes are fair with the point of the cue.* In pushing strokes, if your cue leaves the ball and touches it again, it is a foul stroke.

7. When your own ball touches the object ball, you cannot score ; you therefore run into a pocket, or canon, when the red is again placed on the spot, and the next player goes on from baulk, your ball being in hand. The object ball and the red touching are playable.

8. *Foul strokes* are made in the following ways :—Touching a ball when rolling ; moving a ball when in the act of striking ; playing with the wrong ball, or when the red is off the table, or with both feet off the ground ; touching both

balls with the cue; wilfully knocking a ball off the table; when in hand, playing at a ball in baulk; blowing upon a ball; shaking the table or floor; touching any other ball than your own with hand or cue, or wilfully altering its course.

Exceptions.—Accidentally touching a ball in taking aim; knocking a ball off the table by accident or through fault of the table; playing with a wrong ball when told it is your own by the marker or your adversary; if impeded in your stroke by the player, marker, or bystander. In the latter case no penalty can be claimed for foul; but the balls must be replaced as nearly as possible, and the stroke made over again.

9. *Penalties for foul strokes* are taken by the striker losing his stroke; by the non-striker calling a foul stroke, and breaking the balls; or the non-striker may let the balls remain, or compel the striker to re-make the stroke. In the case of a *changed ball*, the non-striker may either have the balls changed again, so that each player has his own ball, or he may insist on the game going on as the balls then stand, the striker losing any score he has made with the last stroke; or he may play with which ball he pleases; or he may claim for foul, and insist on the striker breaking the balls. If, however, the change of balls be not discovered before a second stroke has been made, the game must go on as the balls then stand, and any score made must be counted.

10. A line ball cannot be played at.

11. Knocking the object ball off the table does not score; forcing your own ball off the

E

table, after having struck another, involves no penalty ; knocking your own ball off the table without striking another is a *coup*, and scores three against you.

12. The player who throws up his cue, or refuses to play, loses the game.

13. All bets go with the game.

14. All disputes to be decided by the marker, and, in case he is unable to decide, by the majority of the company. [Markers should not be allowed to make bets. Few gentlemen bet with professional markers.]

15. If a ball be accidentally moved, it must be replaced as nearly as possible.

16. No bystander has any right to interfere, in any way, with a game till appealed to by the players.

In these sixteen rules you have all that is necessary to know of the ninety or a hundred rules usually given. I must be allowed, however, to add a few remarks just by way of advice and caution :—Be attentive to your game, and lose no fair opportunity of scoring. Do not stand over the pocket or ball your adversary is playing at—it is an ungentlemanly habit. Do not bet if you are nervous, or if the loss of the wager is likely to cause you any uneasiness. Never dispute the score with the marker ; if you have fair reason to believe he scores improperly, or has any interest in making you lose, do not play again in that room. Do nothing to annoy your adversary ; boasting, loud talking, putting your hand near a pocket a ball is likely to run into,

pretending to guide a ball with your finger or cue, making wry faces while taking aim, &c., are all vulgar habits, more "honoured in the breach than the observance." Do not canon from a white ball unless the stroke be nearly certain, as your own is likely to be left in danger. Do not pocket your adversary, except the red be in baulk, or a two-stroke ends the game; as, besides leaving only one ball to play at, it is not considered the high game. When the white is safe under the cushion, it is not good policy to disturb it. In playing *bricole* from the cushion, always remember the grand maxim that *the angle of reflection is equal to the angle of incidence*. Never strike the balls at random, but always have some direct object in view: many points are lost from inconsiderate play; while, on the contrary, many an inferior player wins a game by sheer force of careful play. If there be really no score on the balls, then play for safety, by leaving your own and the red as far apart as possible, or giving a miss; when your adversary's ball is off the table play for baulk rather than risk a doubtful stroke; when near the end of the game do not disturb the red, if it be safe, without there is a good chance of a score off it. Do not vary your strength, or play high or low, without there be an obvious necessity for so doing. Never play carelessly; the chances of the game are so many that you can never be certain of winning till the whole number of points are scored. When under a cushion, and your adversary and the red be safe, it is better to give a

miss than to risk an unlikely stroke. Never play the losing hazard at the white in baulk, when the red is also in baulk, without you are certain of bringing the white out ; nothing tends to the success of a game so much as a careful consideration of the ultimate position of the balls after the stroke. Never allow the red to remain near a pocket, without there is a certain hazard off the white. In playing the red winning hazard, use sufficient strength to bring it away from the cushion, so as to leave another stroke off it ; on the contrary, it is generally best so to play the white winning hazard as to leave it under the cushion after your stroke. Do not attempt canons round the table without careful consideration as to the strength of your stroke and the angles of the table. And, lastly, never forget that *common strokes with careful play stand a better chance than the most brilliant hazards without it.*

CHAPTER V.

THE SIDE STROKE.

My friend Captain Campbell, of the Army and Navy club, boasts that he never plays on a public table, and that he will give any man a hundred pounds who catches him doing so. Now, although the gallant captain is confessedly one of the finest amateur players in the kingdom—he was a pupil of mine, and now he can beat his master—I must tell him that, as a general rule, there is better play on public tables than in the clubs. I quarrel with no man's opinions; but I speak by the card when I say that a billiard player improves more rapidly by playing occasionally with strangers, than by continually matching himself against opponents whose strength of cue is well known to him—as must be the case to a certain extent with club-house players. I have been frequently asked who are the best players in London, and I confess that, although I have played occasionally with Roberts of Manchester, Stark the American, the man who came over here with the avowed intention of beating everybody at his own—the four-ball winning hazard—game, and began by losing his first great match; Edward Green, Hitchin, Richards, Stammers, George and Cyrus Davis, the tavern-keepers of Smithfield; Tabley; the “Oxford Jonathan,” marker at Winsor's Old

Rooms, 252, Strand ; "Pat," the marker at Goode's on Ludgate Hill ; "Joe," the late marker at the rooms in Old 'Change ; "Dick," the marker at Stebbings' ; and the great Jonathan himself—to say nothing of lesser stars—I am at a loss to whom to assign the palm, each one is so excellent in his own way. But I may say that the great strength of all these professional players—except Jonathan, who still prefers the old plan of dividing the object ball, and declares that list are better than India-rubber cushions—lies in their perfect knowledge of the side stroke. I confess at once, however, that Roberts, of Manchester, is out and out the finest player in England. No man who cannot use the side when it is necessary must consider himself a player now-a-days. The fault with most players is their constant and unnecessary use of the side in situations where the full, old-fashioned stroke would answer the same purpose. The principle of the side stroke is to render the reflection from the object ball or cushion more or less acute than it would be if struck in the ordinary way. The old and more usual style of play is to divide the object ball in the manner already explained, striking your own ball full in the centre ; by the side stroke just the reverse plan is adopted, and you divide your own ball and strike the object ball full. By the latter plan much more certainty is attained, from the simple reason that your own ball is immediately under the eye, and can be struck in any part of its circumference, while the object ball is at a greater or less dis-

tance, and therefore particular strokes are more or less difficult of accomplishment. *Every stroke that may be made by dividing the object ball can also be made* (and with much greater precision) *by using the side stroke*; but the reverse of the proposition is not true, for by the use of the side stroke many hazards and canons are possible that cannot be made by simply dividing the object ball. Sometimes (as I shall show by and by) it is necessary to divide both balls; the finest players, indeed, are in the habit of constantly doing so. For the present, however, we will confine ourselves to the simple side stroke. I must presume that my kind friends the amateurs, for whom alone I write, have already made themselves tolerably well acquainted with the manner of dividing the object ball, and that they have arrived at something like precision and certainty in their strokes in common hazards: I proceed now therefore to explain how the side stroke is accomplished. First I must correct one or two very common errors in regard to the action of the side when applied to the striker's ball: if made with too great strength its object is defeated and the ball runs off on the side opposite to the one intended: the ball should be struck, in most cases, *on the side it is intended to go*, with the cue held diagonally, more or less, to the centre of the ball, especially in the screw or twist strokes. The side does not act—or, rather, its action is not apparent—till it reaches the object ball or cushion, when the impetus originally received

will be at once perceived ; for on the direction of the ball's progression being reversed it will be found to run off sharply from the point of contact, with greater acuteness than is observed in its natural angle. The side given to the striker's ball *does not in any case communicate itself to the object ball*, as is by some stated—for on the latter being struck full, its natural course is in a straight line with the striker's ball at the point of contact ; it is only when the object ball is struck otherwise than full that an *appearance of communicated side* is presented.

Now imagine your ball to be divided in the manner shown in Fig. 13. The upper and lower division being understood, and the effect of the high or low stroke being perfectly under the player's command, endeavour to produce the various effects shown in the next figure.

In the four following diagrams, Fig. 13 must be taken as the striker's ball.

For the strokes on the right hand, direct the cue across the ball, and *vice versa*. The various strokes shown in Fig. 14 may all be produced from one position of the striker's ball.

To produce the canon marked 1, strike your ball at 5 E (in Fig. 13) with moderate strength. Of course the hazards may be made with equal certainty ; but canons have been chosen for greater facility of explanation. As we may have frequently to refer to Fig. 13 we may as well speak of it as the *divided ball*. You will find no difficulty in following the figures, though at first sight the directions may appear rather com-

plicated. For case 2, strike at 5 F; for case 3, strike at 2 H; for case 4, a following ball on 1

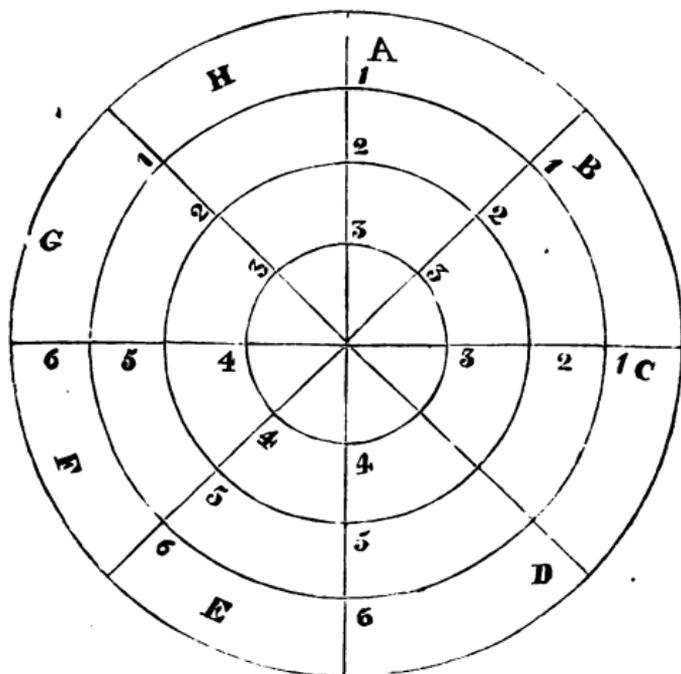


FIG. 13.—The Divided Ball.

H; for case 5, strike at 2 A; for case 6, strike on 3 C; for case 7, a screw from 6 D; and for case 8, a similar screw from 6 E. These directions will be rendered plainer by the example shown in Fig. 15.

Here a slight screw on the divided ball in 5 D will produce either of the canons shown (from 1 to 2, or from 1 to 3), or a hazard in the middle pocket. The reverse side will of course give you the pocket on the right hand side—the cue being

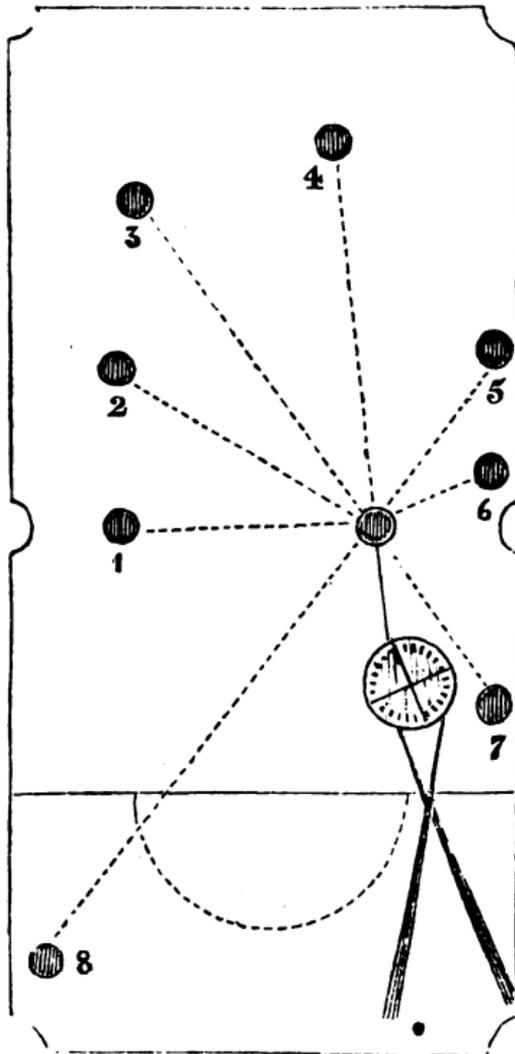


FIG. 14.—Side Stroke Canona. The "divided ball" enlarged. held in both cases diagonally. These examples might be multiplied indefinitely; but, to show

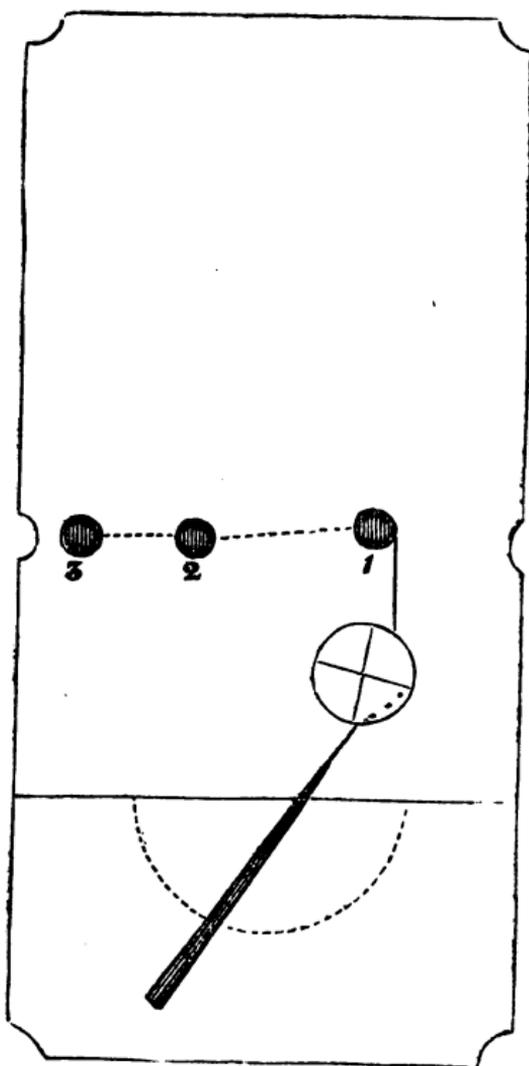


Fig. 15.—Squaring the Ball.

more distinctly the action of the side stroke, let us look at the canons in Fig. 16.

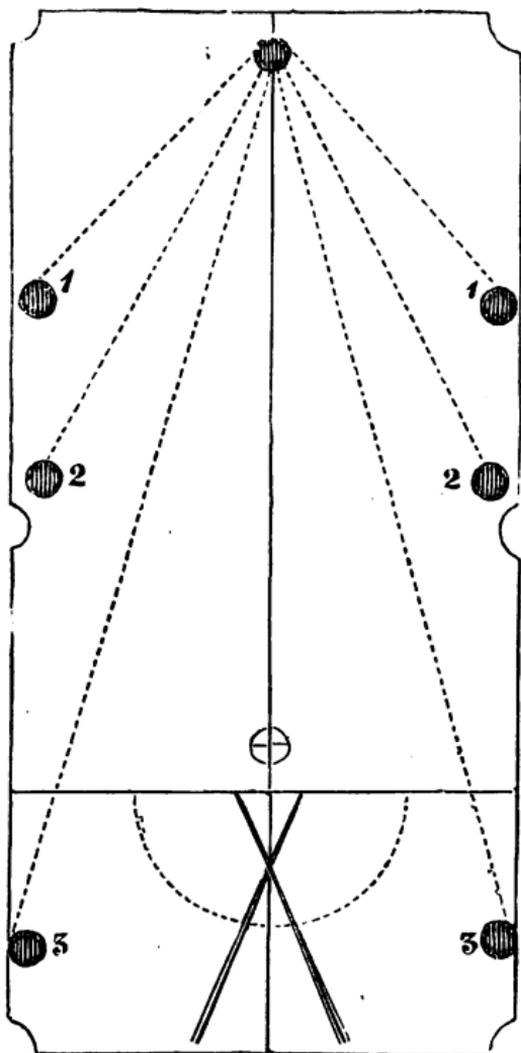


FIG. 16.—Action of the Side Stroke.

The divided ball, struck in the centre with a straight cue, will of course rebound in a straight

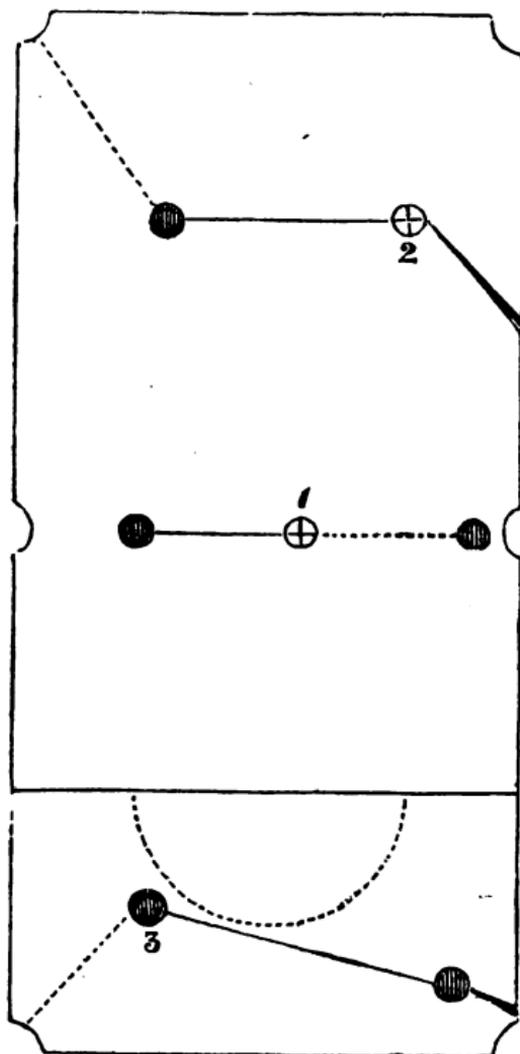


FIG. 17.—Side Stroke Hazards.

line to the centre of the baulk ; struck in 2 A or 2 H, will produce either of the canons marked 1

F

in this figure ; struck in 2 B or 2 G, the canons marked 2 will be made ; and struck on 2 C or 2 F, the canons marked 3 will occur, the cue always crossing the ball opposite to the side struck. It is needless to observe that endless modifications of these strokes must occur in every game, and that a knowledge of these effects must assist the merest tyro.

In the last figure (17) in my present chapter, I have shown three of the most ordinary strokes that occur on the billiard table. In case 1, the centre is the striker's ball, and it is his object to pocket both balls in opposite pockets and canon, making a seven stroke, or a ten, if all the balls be pocketed. This is by no means so difficult as might appear. Strike your ball with a good drawback a very little to the right or left of 6 D, the centre, and you will make a winning hazard, draw back your ball for the canon, and possibly pocket one or both the other balls. In case 2, strike your ball rather below the centre slightly on the right side; and for case 3, a little below the centre on the left side. These three strokes occur in almost every game, and their accomplishment is highly useful, as, whether successful or not, your own ball is generally left pretty safe. I recollect once, in playing with Lord W——, who is a better player than he is a diplomatist, winning a game with a judicious centre ten stroke, which occurred three times in a game of a hundred up. My game was almost gone ; but I took courage, and remembered that good old school motto, *Nil desperandum*.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SIDE STROKE AND SCREW.

It is frequently found of great importance to combine the side stroke and screw. I remember once playing a game with the present Emperor of France—he was a *parvenu*, and “nothing particular” in those days, though, by force of success, he has become a great man since, and is at this moment the most prominent figure in Europe—when a brilliant twist in an unlikely situation brought my opponent’s game into such a favourable position, that he won it easily in a few more strokes. In fact, he won that game of billiards as he won his throne, by a *coup de main*. Now, although brilliant and difficult strokes are often dangerous to play (as in the instance of my imperial friend’s career, which has been a succession of doubtful but splendidly executed *hazards*), they are very useful to know. The *screw* or *twist* may often be brought into play when the more direct and old-fashioned stroke would be utterly useless. With many young players, however, the mode of making the screw is but partially understood; I shall, therefore, before giving illustrations of its effect, attempt to explain its philosophy. In general strokes the cue is held parallel to the axis of the ball (as in A A, Fig. 18); but, to gain a stronger effect of the side stroke, hold the cue at a more or less acute angle (as in B B and C C in Fig. 18). This requires practice, so as to strike

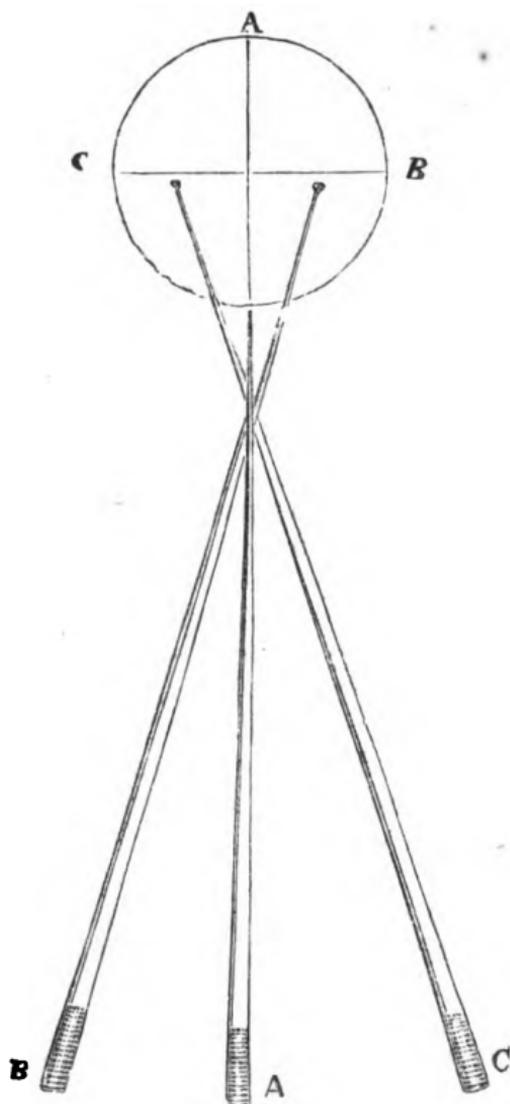


FIG. 18.—Position of the cue for a screw or twist ball.

the ball true ; but it is one of the great secrets of the side stroke. But in holding your cue in this

angle, be careful that you stand easily and firmly behind it, not distorting the body or bending the knees. This extreme power of the side may either be combined with the high or low stroke according as your ball is struck above or beneath its centre. With the low stroke you produce the *slow twist*, a most useful stroke to know. It is not always necessary that you should strike your ball hard in making this stroke, though a certain sharp drawback motion of the arm is absolutely essential to its success. In certain situations, as, for instance, in playing outside the baulk line to canon by *bricole* from the cushion on two balls within the baulk, this stroke is highly useful—the same action taking place whether the object struck be the ball or the cushion, though in the former case its power is much more apparent. In Fig. 19 I have shown the various positions in which the screw

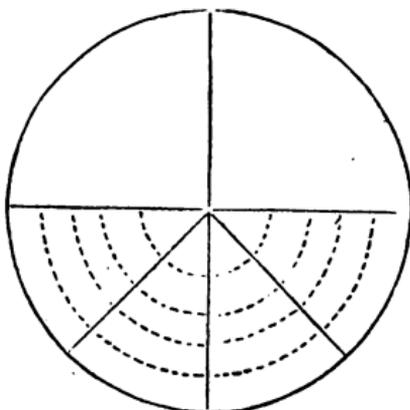


FIG. 19.—Lines of screw.

may be made; the four dotted lines giving the extremes of the striking points. I do not pre-

tend that it is possible to touch every one of these points with absolute certainty ; but the knowledge of the effect produced cannot but prove highly useful to an amateur. In practising with Jonathan at Brighton many years since, he showed to demonstration how the various points of the divided ball might be made to certainly approximate to the effects intended.

Let me now illustrate the position I have taken. In all the figures following, the dot upon the striker's ball is the *point d'appui*.

In Fig. 20, case 1, the striker's ball struck on the left hand side, a very little below the centre, will give you the losing hazard in the left corner ; struck in similar manner on the right hand, the right hand middle pocket hazard may be made, or the canon on to a ball lying near the upper centre, or the pocket in the right hand corner.

In case 2, in the same figure, the various effects shown may be produced according as greater or less screw is put on your ball. These canons and hazards occur in almost every game, and should be practised by placing the balls in the positions indicated.

In Fig. 21, the direct effect of the screw is shown in case 1, where your ball is drawn back for the canon, or hazard in the right hand corner pocket. For this stroke you must strike your ball very low, with a sudden and decided drawback of the arm—not too hard. In case 2, the side nicely put on will give you either of the canons indicated on the left corner pocket. In this and all the other diagrams, the open ball is the striker's, and the black the object ball.

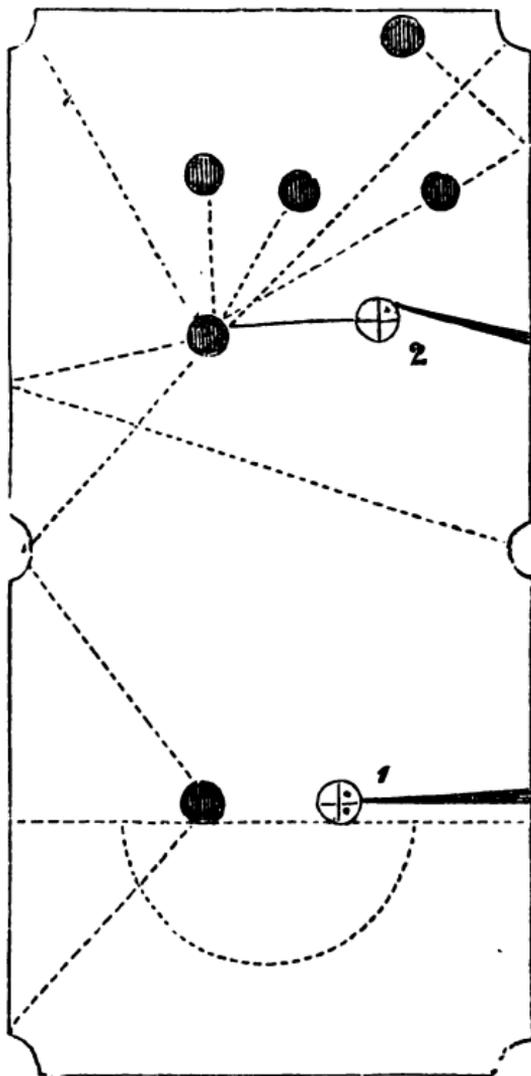


FIG. 20.—Losing hazards and canons.

In Fig. 22, I have shown the different effects produced by the direct and side strokes. In the

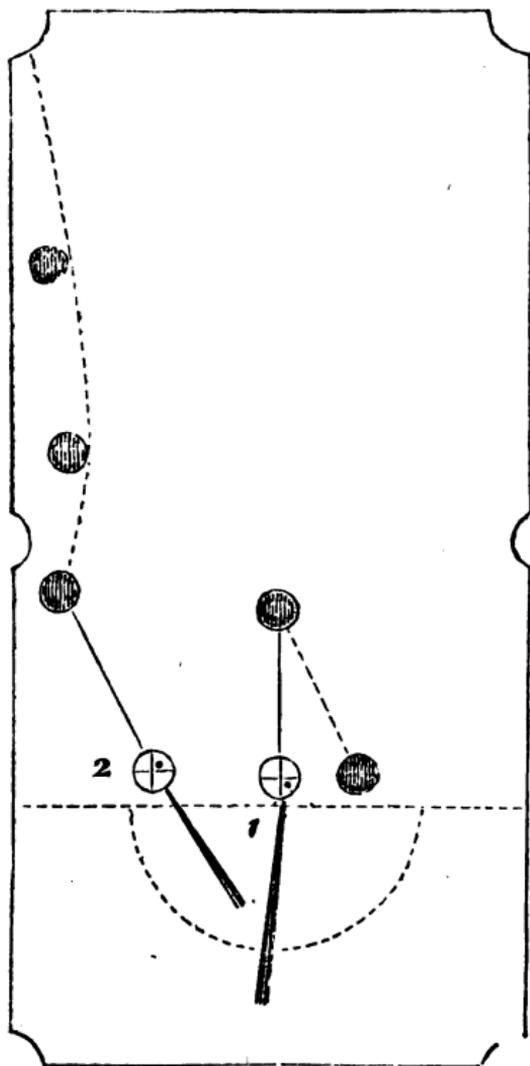


FIG. 21.—The screw and side.

first case (1) a stroke made low on your ball will produce the canon on to the ball near the right

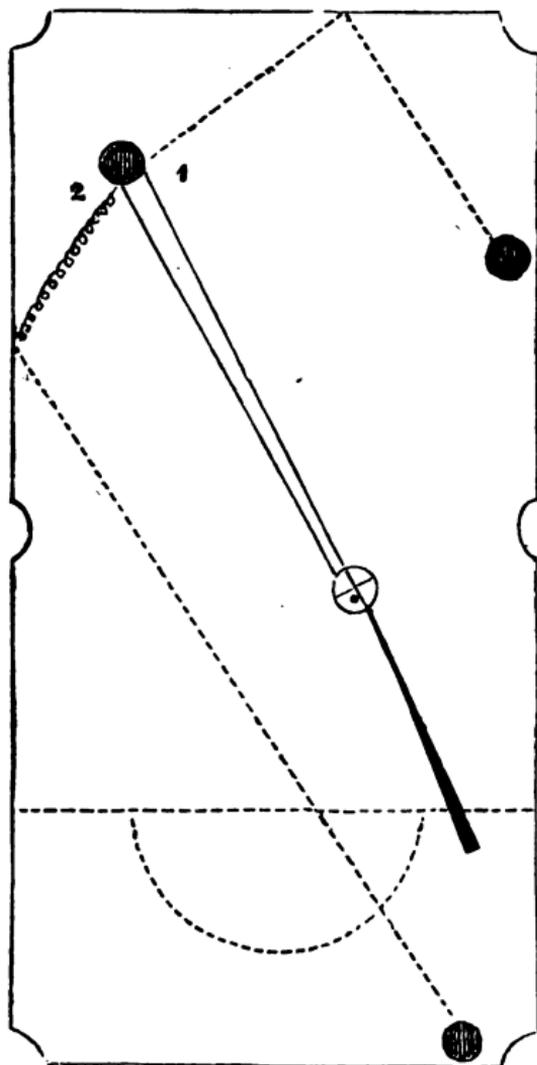


FIG. 22.—Direct and screw canons.

hand cushion. For this stroke the object ball must be struck full. In the other case (2) a very

low side stroke will screw your ball back from the object on to the cushion, when it will run sharply down to the canon or pocket in the right hand corner pocket in the baulk.

In Fig. 23, case 1 requires but very slight screw for the losing hazard. Your ball should be struck either hard enough to bring the object ball back from the baulk to near the middle pocket, or gently enough to produce the same effect, so as in either case to leave another hazard. Case 2 is a highly useful stroke, where in an unlikely position a fine canon may be made, and a hazard in the corner pocket probably left. Your ball must be struck sharply a little below the centre on the left hand side, and it will cross the table in a direct line, and make the canon. Of course the same effect follows a similar stroke in any part of the table. The secret of this stroke is to strike the ball and cushion at the same instant, but the object ball should receive a full blow, or your own ball will follow through it, instead of rebounding from it. It is not of great importance that the object should actually *touch* the cushion. Here the side and screw are brought into combination with admirable effect.

In Fig. 24, we see the various effects following the several degrees of side put on the divided ball. By varying the position of the striker's ball either of the Jennys or the hazards shown may be accomplished, with, of course, any canon that may happen to lie within range. Struck with a fine side the middle or corner pocket may be attained; with a more full stroke, the *bricole*

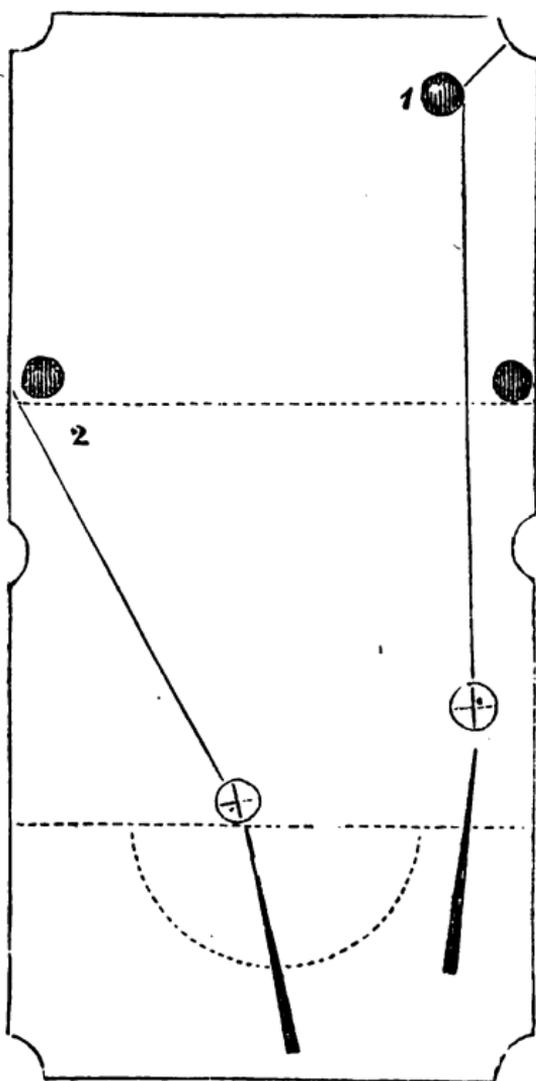


FIG. 23.—Hazard and canon.

from the cushion gives you the middle or end doublet. In these strokes both balls are divided, as shown in the figure.

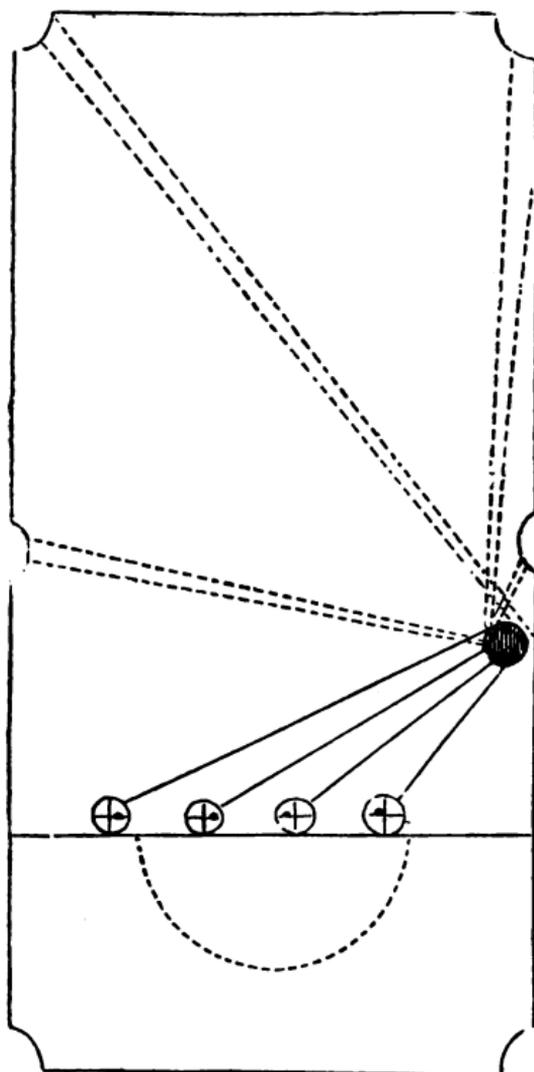


FIG. 24. Strokes made by dividing both balls.

The last figure in my present chapter shows a stroke that is highly useful in pool and winning

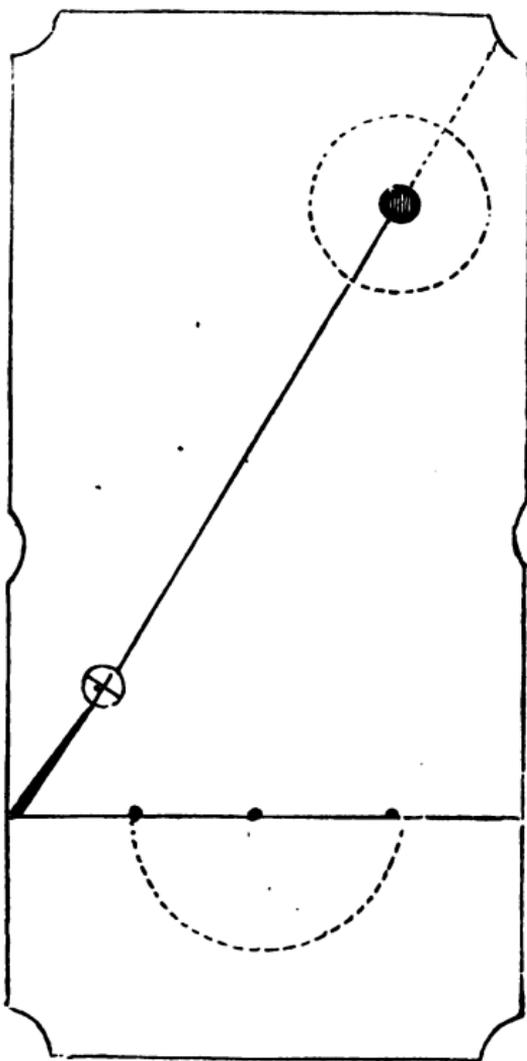


FIG. 25.—Winning hazard, and stop in the centre.

hazard games. Here the object is to pocket the object ball and remain on or near the spot it

G

occupied. A low stroke, very slightly on the side, with a little screw, will accomplish this. The true method of making this stop stroke is to strike your own ball with a sudden full, but low and drawback, action; and when you have by practice attained the freedom of hand necessary for this stroke, and can stop your ball at a good distance, then you may hope to win at pool or pyramids, and not before. *Verbum sap.*

CHAPTER VII.

DOUBLETS—THE FOUR-BALL OR AMERICAN
GAME.

ABOUT five or six years ago, Mr. Stark, a fine player from the United States, arrived in this country; and to him we are mainly indebted for the introduction among us of the Four-ball or American game. His fame as a billiard player had preceded him, and great was the curiosity felt in clubs and public rooms to witness his wonderful skill. No cavalier or knight of ancient or modern days ever wielded lance or sword with such dexterity as that exhibited by Mr. Stark with the billiard cue. No player of the present degenerate times—not even the great Roberts himself—had acquired such mastery over the simple instrument. The number he could score from a single break was something fabulous, and he had come over to the “old country,” not so much to “beat the Britishers”—of course, there could be no doubt about that little achievement—as to show us thick-blooded islanders to what perfection the game of billiards had been brought by its scientific devotees in the “free and independent” land of Stars and Stripes. Mr. Stark was prepared to play any man in England at his own peculiar game, and give him odds! and, like the wealthy thimble rigger on a country race-course, was ready to stake to any amount—had “got more money nor the parson of the parish,

and could break the Bank of England !” Stand aside, John Bull, and make room for the great Mr. Stark, the American ! Such was the sort of rhodomontade that preceded the American ; and, with our usual gullibility, we believed all we heard, and never for a moment suspected the presence of “ bunkum !”

Well, Mr. Stark arrived ; and, to do him justice, he is really a fine player and a modest man. It was his backers, and not he, that boasted. We saw him play several times with tolerably good players at Green’s rooms, in Leicester-square (now converted into a *café chantant*), and he invariably beat them at long odds. Now, the American is a very different kind of game to the English. It is played with four balls, and consists entirely of winning hazards and canons. Our great players had never seen it before. Their practice of winning hazards had been principally obtained in the games of pool and pyramids ; so that Mr. Stark’s game took them a little by surprise. It is true that he really did make some great scores, occasionally getting a hundred or a hundred and fifty, and even more, off one break. But as soon as English players had seen the game they began to practise it ; and, speedily conquering its alphabet, became adepts in every tone and inflexion of its language. The American game was for a time quite fashionable in the clubs and principal public rooms ; but Mr. Stark had not been three months in England before he was challenged and beaten ! He has made no great noise since ; and, though he is doubtless a very excel-

lent player, he has never yet found courage or opportunity to accept a challenge for an even game from Roberts of Manchester, or any other of the celebrated players.

- In observing his game, I soon discovered that its great strength lay, not so much in his canons as in his admirable straight and doublet winning hazards. Till his appearance in England, the perfection and certainty since attained in making winning hazards was certainly unknown ; so that, in spite of his comparative failure as “ the finest player in the world,” he has proved of immense assistance to us in directing our attention to a new and interesting game.

To this game I propose to devote the present chapter ; as, though it is in many respects inferior to the English game, its practice is highly useful in accustoming the young player to the making of winning hazards and canons in apparently unlikely situations. In the games of pool and pyramids, the certainty of direction assumed by the object ball is a matter of great importance ; and I know of no better introduction to those excellent games than an occasional match at the American game, with a good player for antagonist.

Now for the practice.

In the next figure I have drawn several instances of the winning doublet. These, of course, might be multiplied indefinitely, and similar angles might be made to each pocket on the table ; but for our present purpose those given will suffice. I presume that all the diagrams given are regularly practised, otherwise my instructions will

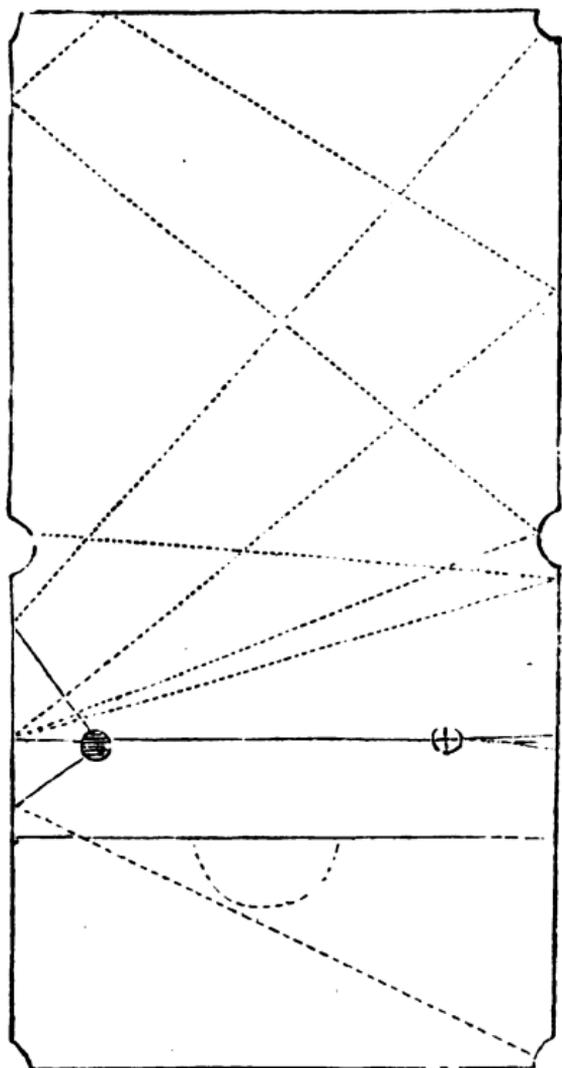


FIG. 26.—Winning doublets.

be useless. In making the winning doublet, it is not necessary to use the side stroke, except for

the purpose of avoiding the chance of a losing hazard—a matter occasionally of much importance. In this figure I have merely indicated the direction of the object ball after reverberation; the success of the stroke must depend on the accuracy with which the ball is divided. For the direct doublet to the opposite side of the table a three-quarter ball is requisite when your own lies immediately opposite the object ball; and by just so much as you vary the division of the ball played on, by so much will the angle be more or less acute or direct. The expert player will soon discover for himself the degree of division necessary in order to produce the particular effect intended, and the education of the eye and hand can really only be acquired by careful study and long practice. If you content yourself, my young friend, by simply *reading* my instructions, you will never become a billiard player. You must take a room to yourself and practise almost daily. A few lessons from a marker will assist you amazingly. There *is* another way of learning billiards, which is to play with any adversary who may present himself and take your chance; but without you have a good long purse you will find this rather expensive. I learnt the game in that way myself; but my preliminary instructions were obtained from a real master of the game, the late Mr. Winsor, of 252, Strand, whose rooms were attended at the time I speak of by some of the best players, as well as the most gentlemanly men, in London. But to return to our doublets.

The only true way of acquiring anything ap-

proaching certainty in making the doublet, is to carefully measure with the eye the angle intended, and note the effect produced; then practise that stroke until you can accomplish it easily. As soon as you get over the first difficulty in making the direct winning doublet across the table into a middle pocket, then try the end pockets, as shown in the preceding diagram, varying the division of the object ball till you have schooled your hand into something like certainty. The other strokes, from the cushion and so on, will follow as a matter of course. The drawing an imaginary line from place to place on the table is, after a little practice, one of the easiest things possible. But never forget the grand maxim that *the angle of reflection equals the angle of incidence*; if it does *not*, then you may be sure of one of two things—either you have put too much *side* on your own ball, or you have divided the object ball. In the first case the angle produced by the reverberation of your own ball will be more acute than you intended; in the other, the return angle assumed by the object ball is faulty, in just the proportion in which the division of it has been incorrect. Let me repeat, that only when *both balls* are struck full and fair in the centre can the maxim be considered an infallible one, and that any variation *must* make the return angle more or less acute or obtuse. I have here been speaking only of the *winning doublet*; but the same remarks will apply equally well to the *losing doublet*—with this difference however: in the latter, the losing doublet, the side stroke may be judi-

ciously introduced, either in conjunction with, or independent of, the division of the object ball. In making the winning doublet, as in the regular winning hazard, you will find it advantageous to grasp the cue firmly, as by that means a more fair and full stroke is obtained—the reverse method of holding the cue being best for losing hazards.

In the American game the winning hazard is in a great variety of instances judiciously combined with the canon. In the following figure I have shown a few of the more common. In cases 1 and 2 the object ball is lodged in the left hand corner, and according as you put the right or left side on your ball, the canons *a a* or *b b*, or any that happen to lie in those lines, would follow. But you must recollect that the pockets *c d* also lie open ; so that in a stroke of this kind great caution is necessary. The pocket and canon shown in case 3 is more safe to play, as from your return ball another hazard or canon would probably be left. The more usual and safe plan is that adopted by Stark. In the American game the ball is placed on the lower spot, nearly centre-wise, between the four top pockets ; and his plan is, whenever he can get into position near the spotted ball, to play a low ball, and stop ; or a slow ball with a little side, and just pass the point of contact. In this way, with the four pockets before him, he has been able to make the extraordinary scores already mentioned. I have myself, in a friendly match with Lord C——, scored a hundred and forty from a position like

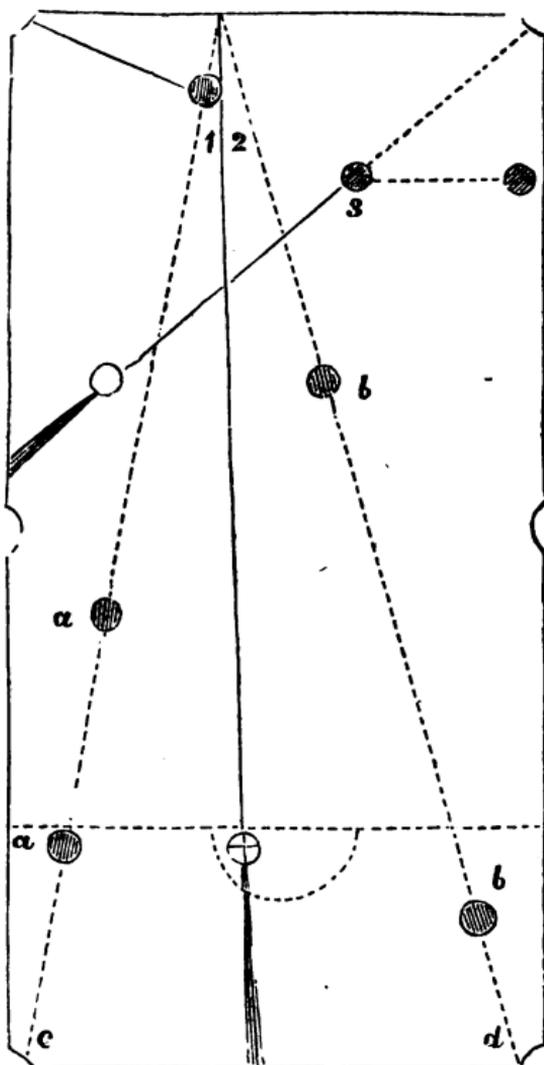


FIG. 27.—Winning hazards and canons.

that marked 3, the red ball being each time spotted on the upper centre or winning spot.

I will now briefly give you the

**RULES FOR THE AMERICAN OR FOUR-BALL
GAME.**

1. This game is played with four balls, red, blue, white, and spot-white. The red ball is placed on the spot immediately below the spot used in the English game; the blue on the spot in the centre of the baulk line; and the white balls are in hand, one belonging to each player.

2. The game is usually played sixty-three up, and consists entirely of winning hazards and canons.

3. The baulk circle is not used, the striker's ball, whenever it is in hand, being played from anywhere within the baulk line.

4. The first player gives a miss anywhere out of baulk (behind the red is usually considered the best place, as the canon is difficult). If the first player strike a ball, his adversary may compel him to go on again, or he may, if he choose, elect to have it remain where it stops, taking one as for a miss.

5. The second player must strike the white ball, or give a miss.

6. If the player pocket his own ball he loses two, three, or four, according to the balls struck, as well as any score he may have made with the stroke.

7. *The points scored are*—two for a canon, two for a white hazard, three for a red hazard, and four for a blue hazard. A canon from the white to the red, or the blue, scores *two*, or *vice versâ*; from the red to the blue, or from the blue to the

red, *three* points ; if from the white to the red and afterwards to the blue, *four* ; a canon from one of the coloured balls to the other and afterwards on to the white, *five*—these last being double canons. Pocketing the white and red, *five* ; the white and blue, *six* ; the red and blue, *seven* ; the red, blue, and white, *nine*. If canons be made they are scored in addition as above : thus fourteen may be scored in a single stroke—*four* for the blue, *three* for the canon to the red, *three* for the red hazard, *two* for the canon on to the white, and *two* for the white winning hazard ; and *sixteen* may be lost, supposing that in addition to the above scores your own ball should also be pocketed—a most unlikely stroke.

8. Foul strokes the same as in the English game ; except that when the striker's ball touches the object ball he is allowed to score.

These eight rules are all that need be borne in mind, though it is usual to give about thirty rules for this excellent game. For a young player I know of no game that presents such good practice for the winning hazards and canons. It is a game, however, to try the temper, as there is a good deal of luck in it ; but then you know the old proverb, which may as well be applied to billiards as to anything else—*Palman qui meruit ferat*.

CHAPTER VIII.

DIVIDING BOTH BALLS—RED WINNING
CARAMBOLE GAME.

I THINK I said before that the operation of the side stroke has the practical effect of removing the axis of the ball struck a little to the right or left, and that its natural axis is regained on the ball's contact with the cushion or another ball. I said also that the side stroke did not take full effect till your ball came in contact with the cushion or other object. By this it must be understood that the effect is not *seen* till it reaches the point of contact; though, from the fact of the ball travelling on an axis removed from its centre, the side must be really given to your ball at the very instant it is struck. By just so much as the ball be struck out of its centre will its rolling point or axis be removed from its natural axis: in other words, when you apply the side you make your ball describe a parabolic curve towards the object at which it is aimed; its natural line of progression being only regained after contact with the cushion or another ball.

In applying the side, it is usual to strike the object ball full; but much greater power is obtained, in particular cases, when both balls are divided. This dividing both balls is, in truth, the real science of the game; and to perform the operation successfully requires great practice. It is not sufficient, in order to gain a very acute

H

angle, that the necessary quantity of side be applied to your own ball; the object ball must also be carefully divided, so as to remove the point of contact from the centre of both balls. This kind of play gives the *appearance of communicated side*, about which so many players are mistaken. The fact is, that this resemblance of side transferred to the object ball arises from both the balls taking angles contrary to that natural to them if struck full or nearly so. Again, in the screw or twist the ball travels more slowly, from the fact that its usual mode of progression is reversed; and instead of revolving, as a wheel does, by a series of over and over revolutions about its axis, it progresses by a contrary method, or, to use familiar language, under and under. The ball struck has two motions—a forward and a lateral one; the two combined form the screw or twist. If you take a boy's hoop, and, holding it beneath its centre, throw it forward, and at the same moment pull it back, as it were, by a sudden jerk, you will find that, after going on a little way, its mode of revolution will be reversed, and it will return to your hand. This is just the philosophy of the screw. You strike it low; it travels by a series of under and under revolutions, and then, when it reaches another ball or the cushion, it returns to your cue's point, instead of taking its natural angle. This is effected in the same way as the boy's hoop returns, because its method of revolution is reversed after contact. I have already explained how, if a ball be struck very high, it travels at its

fastest ; the theory of its return by the screw stroke is, however, just the reverse of this ; for the lower you strike it the slower it travels, and if you strike it low enough it either stops dead, or returns from the point of contact. There is a stroke that is of very easy accomplishment after a little practice, but which appears extremely difficult to a young player—that of playing from the baulk upon a ball on the spot, and screwing it back again to its starting point. This is done by firmly grasping your cue, and putting on a strong, slow twist. Your ball must be struck fairly in the centre, as low as will carry it to the object ball, on contact with which it returns sharply into baulk. This is sometimes a very useful stroke at pool or pyramids ; but without you can do it pretty certainly you had better not attempt it, as the return of your ball into baulk may be much more easily effected from the side cushion. By and by I shall show you other cramp strokes ; but for the present we will consider the effect of dividing both balls.

In the next diagram I have shown one of the most common effects of the division of both balls. When made with judgment canons are not only the most elegant, but the safest balls you can play. The principle of the canon is precisely the same, whether your own or both balls be divided ; but, where canons from two or three cushions are to be made, you will find that, by dividing the object ball, there will be less resistance to the passage of your own ball. The effect of the side will be precisely the same as before,

the cushion, however, it takes its true course, as if struck from that place with the cue; but a little more strength of play is sometimes necessary. The canons in Fig. 28 would appear difficult at first sight; but, if your ball be struck on the dot marked, and the object ball be so divided that you make only a very fine contact with it, either of the canons marked 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 will be accomplished. These, which would appear to an inexperienced player the effect of chance, may be made with perfect certainty after a little practice. The purpose here of dividing the object ball is that you may not altogether remove the side till the cushion is attained. If the object ball, in a case like this, be struck full, the angle taken by your own ball would not be nearly so acute, but would correspond to the line of double dots (*a*); supposing, of course, that you avoid the kiss. In the division of both balls, therefore, you accomplish three objects; you avoid the chance of a kiss, you render the angle as acute as you wish, and your ball travels down to the canon as fast as is needful. Of course the same remarks hold good with regard to almost any position of the balls in which it is necessary to make the canon from the cushion. The canon marked 1 in the diagram might be made by a direct full stroke from one ball to the other; but then it would be much narrower than it is when the left hand cushion is first attained. A canon from two cushions gives you, in most cases, several inches more space; as for instance, when a ball lies in a corner near a pocket, there is a

greater chance of striking it when you attempt the canon from both cushions than if you try only for a direct canon on to the ball. This will be rendered evident immediately if you place one ball over the left-hand pocket at the top, and the other over the right-hand pocket at the bottom of the table, and try a canon from baulk. A canon, you must recollect, is always wider than a pocket; in fact, it is an axiom in billiards that every canon is six inches wide—two inches for the object ball and four for the striker's ball, according to the side on which the point of contact takes place.

But it may be asked, "How am I to judge of the quantity of side I should put on in an instance like this?" This question I have endeavoured to answer in the following diagram:—

Suppose *a* your own ball, enlarged to show the striking spot. You wish to make a canon from *b* to *c*. Imagine a line drawn through the centre of *b* to the centre of *c*, and then strike on the dot on the right side nearest the centre. You wish to make a losing hazard in the pocket *d*. Imagine a similar line from the centre of your own ball to the pocket—here distinguished by a dotted line; strike the outside upper spot by a half ball on *b*; hole your own ball in the pocket *e* by a similar stroke on the outside spot on the left hand; go through the ball *b*, and hole yourself in the pocket *f* by a high ball slightly struck on the left side; canon on *g* by a rather low side stroke on the dot nearest the centre; make the pocket *h* by

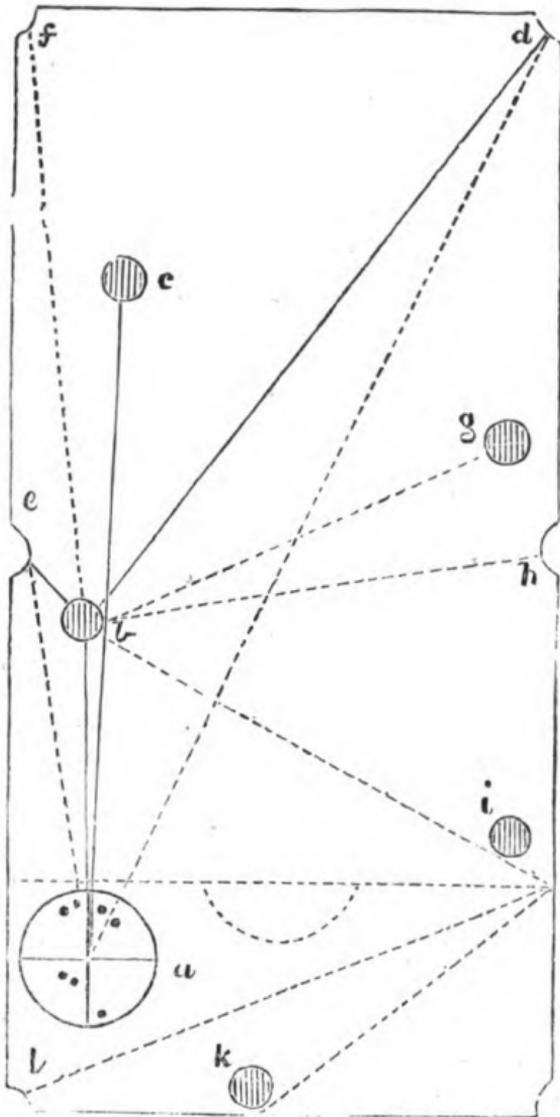


FIG. 29.—Side stroke canons and hazards

a side twist on the outside dot, in both the last cases giving your cue a slightly angular position

across your ball ; return upon *i* and canon, or make the canon *k* from the cushion by a low side stroke from the spot on the right of the centre ; or attain the pocket *l* by a similar stroke a little nearer the centre of the divided ball. All these canons and hazards may be made from one position of the striker's ball. Of course an infinite variety of similar canons may be made, and really do occur, in almost every game. I have given this diagram for practice. I do not mean to say that absolute certainty may be attained ; but what I *do* say is, that such an approximation to certainty, in these and such like canons, may be arrived at as to give the player a decided advantage over an adversary who simply uses the natural angles of the table. My old preceptor, Winsor, was so accomplished a master of the canons from the cushions that it could' almost be said of him that he could canon anywhere about the table from the baulk. I recollect playing with a gentleman who boasted that he played the good old-fashioned game, and never used the side. Well, he certainly was a fine player, and seldom missed a hazard or canon that presented itself. In the first two or three games I stood no chance with him ; but as soon as I came to understand his style of play, I abandoned what is called the "open game," and played to leave the balls under and about the cushion. As soon as I did this his game was over, and I beat him easily. Canons that he missed by the regular full stroke I accomplished by dividing both balls, till at last he was constrained to confess

that, much as he loved the *old style*, he was beaten by the *new*.

The finest and most graceful amateur player I ever knew was a gentleman called "Chad," which I suspect to have been a *nom de plume*. He was so accomplished in the matter of the side stroke and strength of table, that he could divide both balls so as to leave the object ball pretty nearly in the same place, after reverberation from the cushion, for many strokes in succession. For instance, I have seen him score forty-two winning hazards from a red ball lying over the middle pocket—always bringing it back from the top cushion to about the place it originally occupied. The same kind of stroke he was able to make with nearly equal certainty when the losing hazard occurred in an end top pocket. I notice these cases simply to show how much may be acquired by a good eye, a steady hand, and long practice.

What I have said and shown in this chapter will be found highly useful as practice for either of the canon games. The winning canon games are seldom played now-a-days, as they do not present the variety observed in the regular English game. As, however, it will be expected of me that I should notice the principal games played on the billiard table, I subjoin the

RULES FOR THE WINNING HAZARD AND CARAMBOLE GAME.

1. This game consists entirely of winning hazards and canons: foul strokes, misses, &c., counting the same as in the English game.

2. It is usually played twenty-one up, and the players string for lead.

3. The red ball is spotted on the winning spot and the non-player's ball on the spot in baulk. Whenever a white ball is pocketed, it is placed on the baulk spot, so as always to leave a canon to be played for.

4. *The points scored are*—two for a canon; two for a white winning hazard; three for a red winning hazard; four for a white hazard and canon; five for a red hazard and canon; seven for a red and white hazard and canon. If the striker holes his own ball, he forfeits the number of points equivalent to the stroke.

5. If the striker play with the wrong ball, and his adversary does not discover it before a second stroke is made, he reckons all he scores, and retains the ball. If, however, the change be discovered before a second stroke be made, the striker forfeits all points he may have made by the stroke, and his adversary goes on with which ball he chooses.

The other rules are the same as those for the English game.

CHAPTER IX.

CRAMP STROKES AND CRAMP GAMES.

I DARE say many of my readers have noticed occasionally the various feats of dexterity performed by old handlers of the billiard cue. These strokes, though not often brought into play, are, in many cases, highly useful in recovering an apparently lost game. An instance occurs to me in which young Blomfield, an excellent player, and son of the late Bishop of London, made a cramp stroke of such surpassing brilliancy that it brought the balls into play, and enabled him to recover his position, in a game apparently irretrievably gone. Another such a case occurred in my own play, at Brighton, a few years since. I was engaged in a difficult match with a very careful player, who has since proved himself as dexterous with the sword as he formerly was with the cue, and has proved his prowess in many a brilliant sortie and repulse against the Muscovites before Sebastopol. The stroke I speak of is that delineated in the upper left hand corner (1) of Fig. 30. The object ball, the red, lay close against the top cushion, with my own ball nearly touching it, and the white ball hugging the side cushion near the pocket. In this position I was enabled to make an eight stroke, and afterwards a canon from the white to the red on the spot, which break gave me, with the subsequent strokes, such command of the

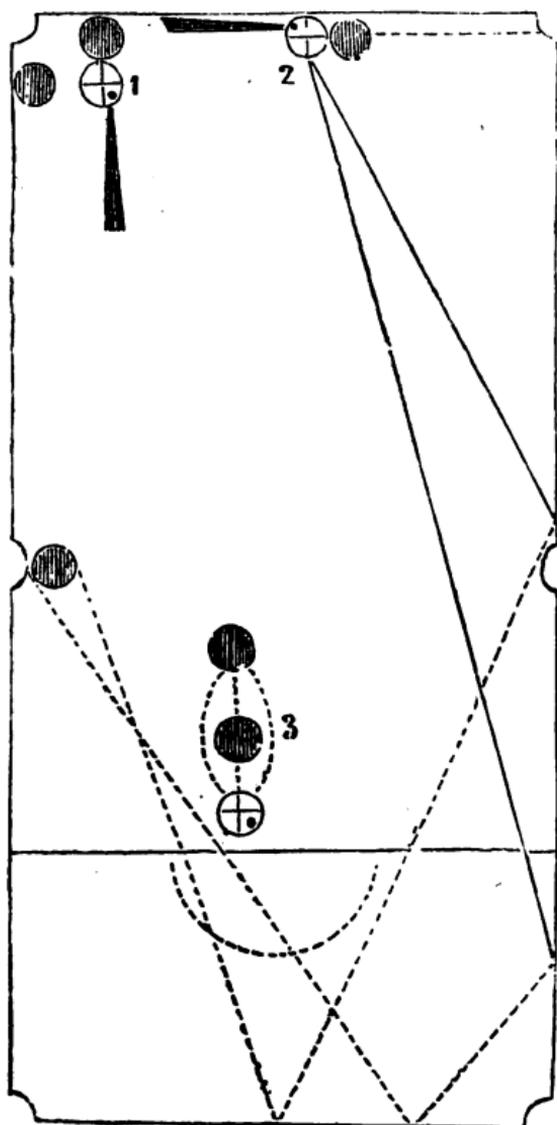


FIG. 30.—Cramp Strokes.

game, as carried my score beyond my opponent's, and eventually secured me the game. Now, in

a position like this, the more usual stroke would be the simple canon ; but, by a decided *push* a little on the right side of my ball, I forced the red into the corner pocket, made the canon, and then followed into the pocket with my own ball—three for the red winning hazard, two for the canon, and three for the losing hazard, off the red. I am not aware that the stroke has ever been noticed before—certainly not in print ; but I have since found it very *sérviceable*. It is very easy of accomplishment, if you place the point of your cue close against your ball, at about the place marked by a dot in the figure, and *push it forward*, gently but decidedly, and without allowing your cue to leave the ball till the stroke is made. The object ball, thus impelled, makes a series of slow revolutions to the pocket ; your own ball follows to the canon, and the kiss gives you the losing hazard. This position often occurs. If, as in a game of pool, it is your intention to pocket only the object ball, you must slightly divide it, which will give your own ball a tendency to run to the right instead of the left. The same kind of pushing stroke made on the *left* side will, of course, give you the losing hazard. You must be careful, however, not to touch the cushion with the point of your cue, or the stroke will be foul. I have shown this stroke to a great many players, and they all acknowledge it to be a capital one, as it may be made in any corner, and at almost any distance from the pocket. In the game of pyramids a stroke like this is of immense advantage sometimes, as not only can

you make the winning hazard, but leave your own ball safe as well.

The next stroke (2) in Fig. 30 shows how advantage may be taken of a common situation. Instead of the ordinary winning hazard in the corner, the player stands a little to the left of his ball, and, putting on a slight high side, strikes the object ball full in the corner, runs down to the bottom of the table, in either of the angles marked, and makes the canon. With a ball lying a little lower down than the one over the middle pocket in the diagram, a nine or ten stroke may be made according as the white or the red ball is placed next the striker's ball. In this stroke the striker's and the object ball should lie close to each other, but not touch. A ten stroke may also be made with the red ball lying over the centre, and the white over the end pocket: the striker's ball in hand. To pocket the red, make the canon, and hole the white, is easy enough; but to follow in after the white ball requires an extreme high stroke; on the *right* of the striker's ball, if the object balls lie on the left cushion, and *vice versa*.

The stroke marked 3 in Fig. 32 is comparatively useless, and is introduced simply to show what may be done by a clever player. Here it is the object of the striker to play on the distant ball without touching the centre ball. This may be accomplished either by the stroke called the *dip*, in which you lift or jump your own ball over the centre ball, or by making your own ball assume a parabolic curve to the object without

touching the centre ball. To make the *dip* you must strike your ball about three-fourths in the centre, your cue being raised so as to command the upper surface of the ball. For this purpose you must raise the rest hand on to the tops of the fingers and strike perpendicularly down on to the ball with a sharp and sudden impetus—which, by the way, is very likely to tear the cloth and cost you a guinea. The striker's ball then rises from the table with a reversed action, and passes over the centre ball on to the end one. Or the same effect may be produced by an extraordinary fine slow side stroke, as shown in the engraving. Mr. Goode, of Ludgate Hill, tells a story of one Jabez Hare, who attained such a degree of certainty with this kind of dipping or jumping stroke, that he could make his ball fly from one corner of the table to another and lodge it in a pocket without touching a ball that was placed directly in front of the pocket! and I have heard of another player who is said to have been able to canon upon a ball placed on a second table five feet off the one from which he played! I have seen some wonderful things done on a billiard table; but I do not stake my reputation on the truth of these anecdotes.

In Fig. 31, I have shown a very common experiment—that of striking a ball without touching the intermediate one, all the balls lying near to or touching the cushion. The ball (A) at the bottom of the table is the striker's, and the next we will suppose to be the red. To strike the ball 1 without touching the red you must hold

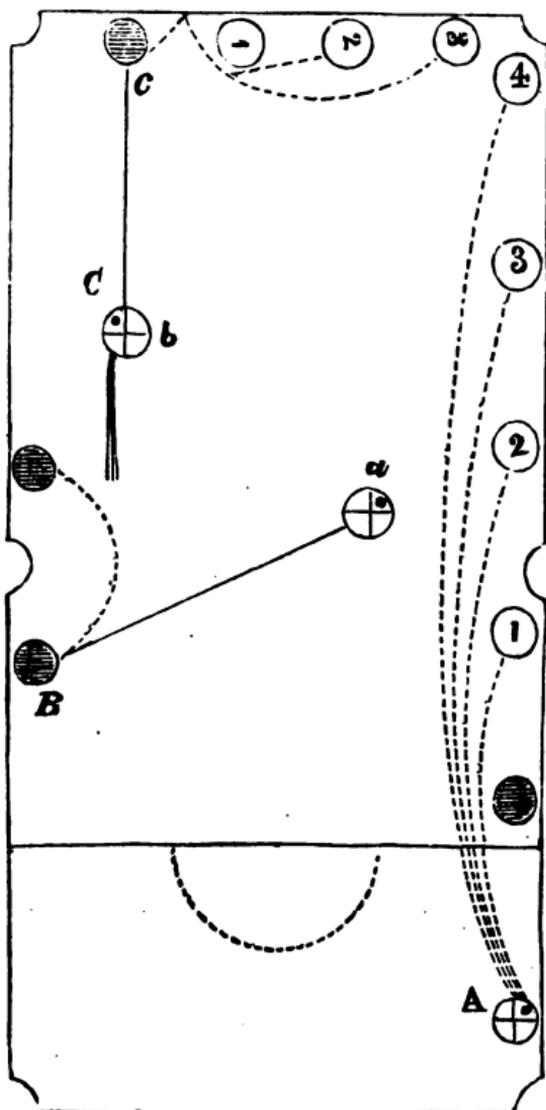


FIG. 31.—Cramp Strokes.

the cue nearly perpendicularly and strike your own ball right on the top, aiming half an inch

from the red; to strike 2, the same kind of stroke is made, aiming two inches from the red; for 3, you must aim three inches; and for the stroke on the ball marked 4 you must take aim at least four inches from the red. In each of these strokes the distance to be travelled by your own ball must be carefully measured, as upon the curve assumed depends its success. Striking the ball on the top has the effect of altering its running axis, and, in fact, making a screw by striking a high ball instead of a low one; hence the curve, which is equivalent to the extreme side, or to the return stroke when the ball is struck much below its centre.

In the stroke marked B in the same figure we have a forcible exemplification of the effect of the side stroke. I have seen my friend, the Earl of Y——, place a hat or the pool-basket against the centre pocket, with a ball at a little distance on either side of it, and make a canon from one ball to the other. Of course the putting the hat or the pool-basket on the table is all bosh; but the making the canon, in the curve shown, is a fine stroke. When first I saw it I was rather puzzled, but, on examination, I found it easy enough. Suppose the balls placed as in the figure and a to be the striker's ball; to produce this canon you must play a rather low right hand side stroke and at the same moment divide the object ball by about one-third its circumference. The two balls then slightly kiss, and in its passage from the cushion the striker's ball assumes curve enough to pass round the hat or

basket and canon on the other ball. It makes no difference which ball you play at first, so that you reverse the position of the strike ball. This is a good betting stroke, and any ordinary player may attain it easily by an hour's steady practice now I have told him the secret. Both this and the next stroke in the diagram depend on the kiss from the cushion.

To canon when both balls touch the cushion (C, Fig. 31) requires a fine side stroke. Suppose *b* your own ball, *c* the red, and you wish to canon on 1; you must strike *b* high on the left, dividing the red three-quarters to the right; to canon on 2, the same stroke rather stronger; and on 3, you must strike *b* a little nearer the centre. All these canons are made by a kiss from the cushion. Striking your own ball on the left keeps it close to, or rather makes it drag, the cushion.

All these cramp strokes are useful to know, though I should not advise any young player to attempt them in a match without there is fair warrant for their use and a degree of certainty in their execution. Many others might be given, but these will suffice. Indeed, there is scarcely a marker in any room in town or country who will not show you half a dozen or more of these cramp strokes for a glass of brandy and water or a few cigars. The few I have adduced may be brought usefully into practice, however, and may be considered almost legitimate strokes. Cramp strokes, like Mr. Dickens's style and Mr. Punch's way of beating his wife, are mere tricks of the

hand, and have no more to do with the real game of billiards than the eccentricities of the puppet and the novelist have with genuine humour and pathos.

Let me now say a few words about

CRAMP GAMES.

Most of these games are played sixteen up; but they may, of course, consist of any number agreed on. The rules are the same as in the English Hazard and Canon Game. The most common of the cramp games is—

1. *One Pocket to Five*.—In this game one player selects a single pocket, giving the other five to his antagonist. The rules are the same as in the English game, except that a hazard in the opponent's pocket scores against the striker. The art is to keep your ball in play in your own portion of the table; and as all canons count, the odds given, where the players are of equal strength, are about, I consider, fifteen in fifty. Mr. Kentfield (Jonathan) is very fond of this game. I have frequently played it with him. When an amateur plays a novice this is a good game for practice.

2. *The Go-back Game*.—In this all the canons and hazards score, as in the English game. It is usually played sixteen or twenty-one up. The principle of the game is this: the superior player must score the game off the balls, or at some interval of his adversary's score, as for every hazard the latter makes the go-back player loses the

points he has already gained and goes back to *nil*. The odds between even players are about three to one against the go-back ball; but with a good player against an inferior, the chances are about equal. It is a lively game.

3. *The Commanding Game*.—This is seldom played now-a-days, except where a first-rate player engages a novice. Instead of the player choosing his own stroke his adversary chooses for him—the rules being the same as in the English game, with these exceptions: 1. If the striker play at a different ball from that commanded, he loses a point, and the ball is replaced. 2. If the striker miss the ball commanded and strike the other, he loses one for the miss, and the balls must be replaced. 3. No hazard or canon scores unless the ball commanded be first struck. 4. If the balls touch, the striker can score notwithstanding.

4. *The Nomination Game*.—This is the regular English game; but each player must name his stroke before making it. If he make any hazard or canon not named, that stroke scores against him. But if he name a stroke and make it, he is entitled to count all the points arising from it; for instance, if he name a losing hazard off the red, and with the same stroke pocket the red as well, he scores six: if he name a canon and make it, and afterwards run into a pocket, he counts all the points made. It is a slow and uninteresting game.

5. *The Doublet Game* is played entirely by doublets from the cushion. It is usually played

- sixteen up by equal players. All canons and hazards made without first making the doublet, score against the striker. *The Bricole Game* is similar to this, except that the cushion, and not the ball, is first struck.

6. *Side against Side*.—In this game one player takes the right hand cushion and three pockets, and the other the left. Canons in the centre of the table and from either cushion count; but all winning and losing hazards made in your opponent's pockets score against you. It is an equal game, the points being scored as in the English game.

7. *Winning Hazards against all Hazards and Canons*.—Among even players the odds are about two to one.

8. *Canons against Hazards and Canons*.

9. *Two Pockets to Four*.—Between equal players the odds are about ten in fifty.

10. *Choice of Balls*.—This game is usually played by an inferior against a good player, the former choosing his ball each time he strikes, and scoring all he makes against the latter's winning and losing hazards.

11. *Hazards*.—At this game any number of players may engage. The striker plays upon any ball on the table, and receives a stake from the player whose ball he pockets, playing afterwards upon the nearest ball. A good game for young ladies and gentlemen in a country house.

12. *The Limited Game* is played with a line drawn down the middle of the table, beyond which neither player can pass without forfeit.

With scientific players this is an interesting game ; with inferior players it is merely a funny one. It is very seldom played.

13. *The Stop Game.*—In this game the striker's ball must never touch the cushion, except under the penalty of losing one point. Losing hazards count even if they touch the edge of the cushion in going into the pocket. It is a game for good players.

Here, then, are a round baker's dozen of what are called Cramp Games. There are several others ; but they are very childish and uninteresting, and, therefore, not worth knowing. In my next chapter I shall speak of several foreign games.

CHAPTER X.

FOREIGN GAMES.

ALTHOUGH the English is confessedly the best and most scientific game on the billiard table, many of the foreign games present considerable amusement and variety; and, as it is but right that I should leave nothing connected with billiards untouched or unnoticed, I shall devote this chapter to those foreign games most commonly played.

The French or Carambole Game. In Paris and many continental cities the game of billiards is commonly played on a small table without pockets; canons, therefore, are the only strokes that can be made. What is, however, known as *French billiards* is played on the usual table, and consists of canons and winning hazards. The most fashionable and scientific mode of playing this game in France is that in which the hazards count against the player, and the score is made entirely by doublet canons. This game is seldom played in England; but I have seen and joined in it in almost every city of France and Germany. In fact, whenever Frenchmen meet, it is the game *par excellence*.

The simple Canon Game, as played in England, consists either—

Of canons only, in which both winning and losing hazards score against the player;

Of canons and winning hazards, losing hazards counting against the player ; or,

Of canons and losing hazards, winning hazards counting against the player.

The game is usually played twenty-one up ; and the points are taken as in the English game—two for a canon or white hazard, and three for a red hazard ; one for a miss, and three for a *coup*.

The variations are—

1. On commencing the game the red is placed on the winning spot, and the non-striker's ball on the baulk spot ; whenever the latter is holed it is again placed on the spot as before, so that there are always two balls to play at.

2. The baulk is considered, as in the American game, to be anywhere within the *baulk line*, without reference to the semicircle.

3. If, after making a canon, the white ball is pocketed and the red ball is left within the baulk line, the red is again placed on the spot.

4. The player, being in hand, must play at the red first.

Of course, the great art in this game lies in the facility with which the player can make canons. It is not an uncommon thing for a good player to stake his canons against the canons and hazards of an indifferent one, or his canons against the other's hazards, and so on. Here the player's knowledge of the angles of the table comes into advantageous operation, and the division of both balls shows its superiority over the ordi-

nary mode of play. To illustrate my remarks let me ask you to look at the following diagram, in which, without both balls were divided, the canon would be nearly impossible. In the first case, suppose a to be the striker's ball, and he wishes to make the canon. To play full upon the object ball and run through it would almost inevitably lead to a kiss and spoil the stroke, and most probably leave a canon for his opponent. Instead of that, he plays an extremely fine stroke upon the object ball, and the left side he put on his own ball carries it onwards to the cushion in the direction of the first dotted line. On meeting the cushion the side takes full effect and brings his ball acutely down to the canon. Now this stroke *may* be accomplished by playing round the table, but it is *very uncertain*. In the next case, suppose b to be the striker's ball; he puts on a narrow right side stroke, merely grazes the object ball, and comes down, according to the strength, and canons upon either 1, 1*, 2, 3, or 4, or any ball lying within that line of reflexion. You see how important, then, is a knowledge of this plan of dividing both balls. I have known players who could make these canons with a walking-stick; and I recollect seeing a one-armed man in France who could *throw* the ball from his hand with such certainty as to be able to play the canon game against ordinary players who scored all the canons and hazards with the cue. So much for knowledge and practice.

Let us now pass to

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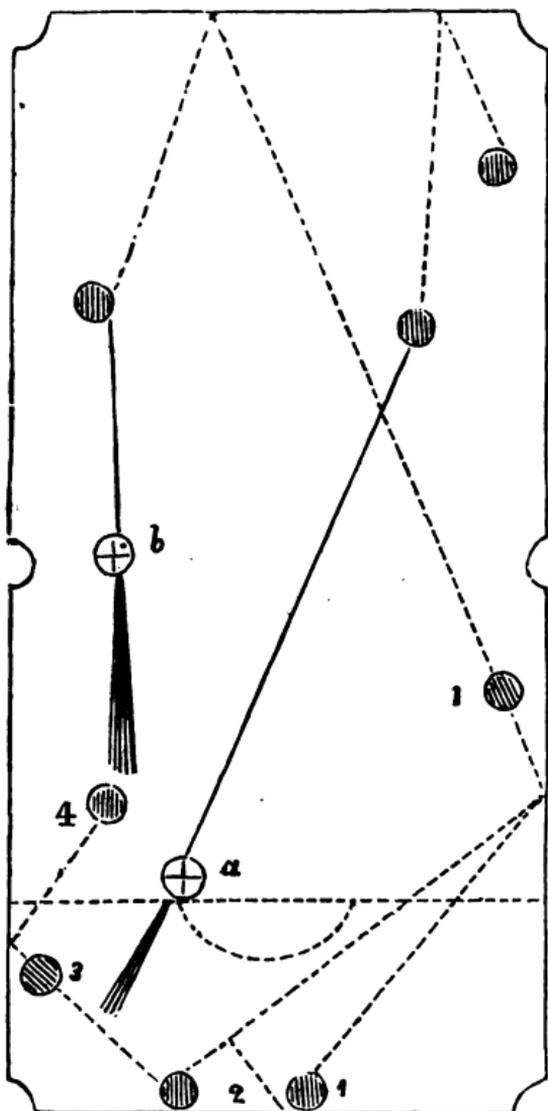


FIG. 32.—Canons by dividing both Balls.

The Skittle Game (Kugel-partie).—I am doubtful whether this game is originally a Spanish or

a German one. It is played with three balls and five wooden pins or skittles; sometimes nine pins are used. The skittles are placed in the centre of the table between the two middle pockets, forming a diamond with the point to the baulk, in the manner shown in Fig. 33.

The red ball is placed on the spot; the players string for choice of balls and lead; and the usual rules common to the English game are observed.

The game is then played thus:

The points played are usually thirty-one up, and are scored by winning and losing hazards, canons, and knocking down the skittles.

The player whose turn it is to start plays at the red ball from baulk, and endeavours to knock down a pin with the same stroke. If he knock down a pin without *first* striking a ball, he loses a point, and the pin is replaced. The other player goes on as soon as the first has done scoring.

The points are thus reckoned:

If the player, after striking a ball, knock down a pin, he gains *two* points; if he knock down two pins, he scores *four*—and so on, *two* for each pin. If he knock down the *whole* of the pins at one stroke, he wins the game. If he pocket the red ball, he scores *three*, and *two* for each pin knocked down; if he pocket the white ball, he scores *two*, and *two* for each pin down.

If he strike a ball, and then knock down the middle pin, he scores *five*, and *two* for each of the other pins knocked down.

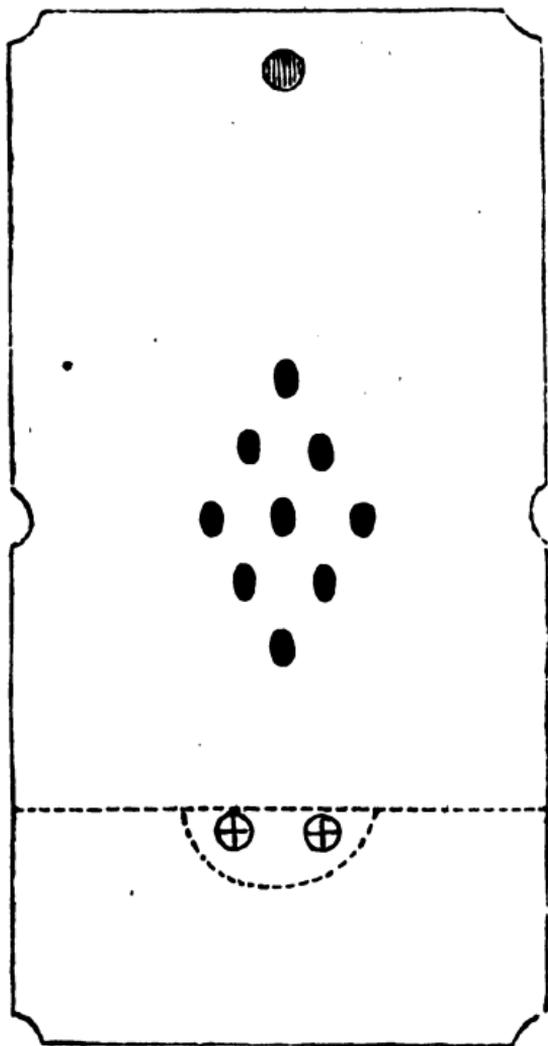


FIG. 33.—The Table arranged for the Skittle Game.

Losing hazards count against the player in the same proportion.

The American or Four Ball Game has already been noticed.

Pool and Pyramids, though games of foreign origin, can scarcely now be called foreign games. I shall notice them, therefore, in another chapter.

The Sausage Game (Wurst-partie).—This is a game of German origin, and is played with fifteen coloured balls, twelve of which are placed in two rows, the players taking each a ball, white and spot-white. The striker breaks the balls, and his object is to place two balls in each pocket, and two *only*. The game is usually played sixty-four up, and is scored by counting *two* for each ball placed in the corner pocket, and *eight* for each ball holed in the centre pockets. Losing hazards count against the player. There is great variety in this game towards the end, as it is the object of the player, when he cannot score himself, so to place the ball as to render it difficult for his adversary to hole it.

The German Pyramid Game (Pyramiden-partie).—This game is played with twenty-one balls. The balls are placed on the table as in our pyramid, with the point towards the baulk. After the first stroke the player may play *with* any ball *at* any ball. It is a sort of *solitaire* for each player in turn. Three balls must be placed in each pocket at the pleasure of the adversary. Losing hazards count against the player. The balls count two each, and a price is set on each ball. When all the balls are pocketed at one break, double stakes are claimed. It may be played any number up.

Handicap Sweepstakes.—This game, which can scarcely be called a foreign one, is played in the

same way as the English, with three balls, the red spotted, and the white played from baulk. Any number of players can join in it, each player being handicapped according to his strength of play. Thus, one may have fifty to score; another, forty-five; a third, forty; a fourth, thirty, and so on. The players string for the start, and when the first has done scoring, the second goes on; the third follows, and the rest in rotation. The player who first makes up his number wins the stakes—usually sixpence or a shilling each—out of which the charge for the table is taken. In case of the player making a miss it has been usual to add one to each of the others' scores; but in Jonathan's rooms in Brighton, where the game is very often played, one point is taken from the score of the player, and the others reap no advantage. This is evidently the fairest mode of reckoning the points. The same also with *coups*. This is a very amusing and speculative game for a number of players; it is easier, too, than pool, as the best players, if the handicap has been well made, have no advantage over the worst.

The Four Match is the English game played by two pairs of partners. Each player is allowed to advise his partner, and no player can be put out till he has made a stroke. Two commence the game, and at every winning or losing hazard the opponent goes out and the other player proceeds with the game. Two misses without a stroke between also put the player out. The game is usually played sixty-three up, and the rules for the English game are observed.

The Game à la Royale is played by three players, with the same rules, as regards hazards, canons, and misses, as in the English game. Each player keeps to his own score, and he who first makes up his allotted number of points receives stakes of the other two. All forfeits from misses, *coups*, &c., score to each of the other players. The players string for lead; two go in, and the third plays with the ball left by the first, each one taking his turn to strike on the other ceasing to score.

Caroline or Carline.—This is a Russian game, played with five balls. There are many ways of playing it; but the following is the most common, at least in England:—

The red ball is placed on the winning spot, a blue ball on the spot in baulk, and a yellow or brown ball on the centre. This centre ball is called the *carline*. The players take a white and a spot-white ball, and string for lead. The game is usually played sixty-one up, and the points are scored in the following manner:

For every canon, *two*; and for every canon after the first, *two*.

For a white winning hazard in any pocket, *two*.

For a red winning hazard in any pocket, *three*.

For a blue winning hazard in any pocket, *four*.

The *carline* ball can be held in either of the centre pockets *only*, in which it counts *six*.

The game thus consists entirely of winning hazards, canons, and forfeits.

If the yellow or carline ball be lodged in any other than a middle pocket, it loses in the same proportion as it would have gained.

All losing hazards forfeit in the same proportion as they would have gained. Thus, in a single stroke the player may lose twenty-three, supposing he had pocketed the carline (six), made a canon (two), pocketed the red (three), made a canon to the blue and pocketed it (six), and then run into a pocket himself (forfeiting six, as he struck the carline first). This is, however, a most unlikely stroke.

At the start each player strikes the red ball ; if no hazard or canon be made by the first player, the other goes on and plays at the red wherever it has stopped.

Knocking a ball off the table scores the same as if it were pocketed—the white, *two* ; the red, *three* ; the blue, *four* ; the carline, *six* ; but if the striker's ball be forced over the table, he loses in the same proportion. The game is played from the baulk *line*, not the semicircle.

When the striker's ball is in hand, after the first stroke, he can play at any ball in baulk.

The striker's ball touching another does not prevent him from scoring.

This game may be considerably varied according to the pleasure of the players. For instance : *losing* may be substituted for *winning* hazards ; canons may be made *before* or *after* the winning hazards ; the canon may be reckoned as two, three, four, or six, according to the ball first played on ; not following the stroke after making

a canon ; barring any of, or all, the canons, &c. ; but in what way soever it is played, it is a good and amusing game for young players, and provides capital practice for winning hazards and canons.



CHAPTER XI.

PYRAMID POOL.

IN many of the clubs and public rooms pyramids has almost superseded the regular winning and losing games. As an exhibition of manual dexterity the game is decidedly inferior; but in the various chances it affords for the making of wagers, it is superior to the English game. This last matter, however, is of slight consequence, as gambling has really nothing to do with billiards *per se*.

Pyramids consists entirely of winning hazards, and therefore presents less variety than in a game where both hazards and canons score. It is essentially a betting game, and is always played for a stake upon each ball, besides the stake on the pool. Indeed, I can scarcely conceive a couple of players engaging in a pyramid without a stake on the balls; such a game would be "flat, stale, and unprofitable;" though nothing is more common than to see the English game played merely for the tables—an undoubted evidence, I think, of its decided superiority over all other games on the billiard table.

The game of pyramids is probably of German origin, being a simple modification of the *pyramiden partie*. It is usually played, in this country, with fifteen coloured balls and a white one, though a greater or lesser number of balls may be employed, according to the rules of the

room or the pleasure of the players. When an even number of balls forms the pyramid, the last ball counts *two*; when an odd number, *one*.

The balls are arranged on the table in the form of a pyramid, or triangle, with the apex towards the player, in the manner shown in Fig. 34—the single ball or point being placed on the winning spot.

The whole art of this game consists in pocketing the coloured balls, and the player who succeeds in holing the greatest number, wins.

After deciding as to the lead, the player strikes his ball from baulk at the mass on the table. If he succeeds in pocketing a ball, he proceeds to strike at any other ball he chooses from the place where the white ball stops. On his failing to pocket a ball, the other player goes on from the place of the white ball; and so the game proceeds till all the balls are pocketed.

If the player pocket his own ball he loses a point, a ball is replaced on the winning spot, and the striker's ball is played from baulk.

If the player pocket one or more coloured balls, and with the same stroke holes his own ball, the coloured balls are replaced and the next player goes on from baulk, the former striker losing a point.

The coloured ball, when replaced, must be put on the winning spot; and if that be full it must be placed on the winning and losing spot; if that also is so occupied that the ball cannot be placed there without touching another ball, the centre spot must be used, and in failure of that, the baulk spot.

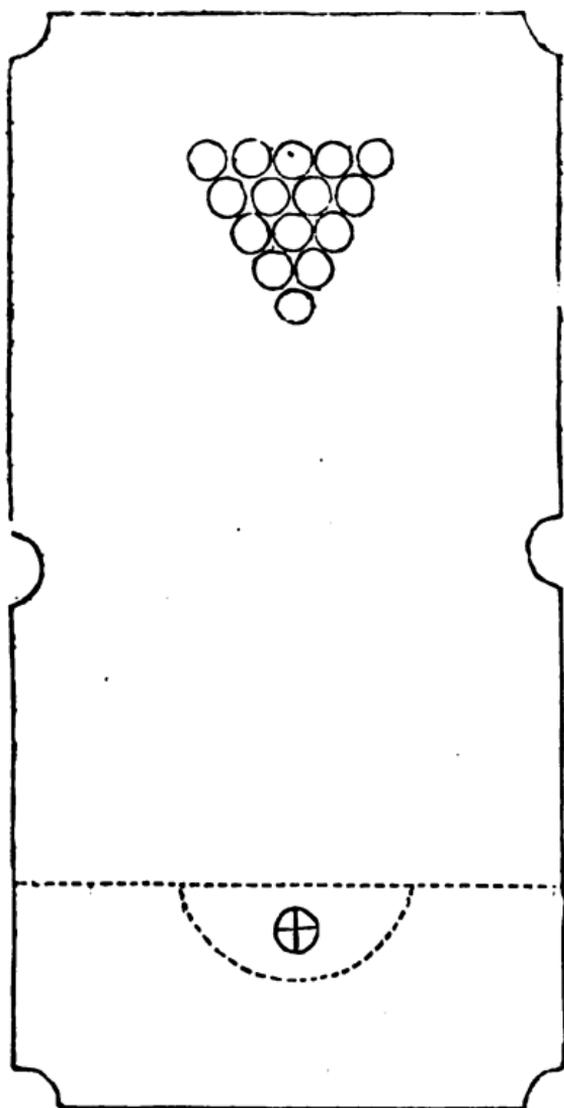


FIG. 34.—Balls arranged for a Pyramid.

In pocketing his own *as well* as a coloured ball, two balls must be put on the table, one for the

coloured ball holed and the other for the point forfeited ; and so of any number of balls pocketed by the same stroke.

If the player make a losing hazard, before he has taken a ball, he is technically said to *owe* one; and the first ball he takes is placed on the spot open. If the game is finished before he is enabled to pay the ball owing, he must pay the winner for a ball extra : thus it is possible to win by sixteen or more balls.

If the player make a miss he^f forfeits one point, and a coloured ball is placed on the table. Cases will occur in which it is doubtful whether the stroke can be reckoned a miss or merely foul. The marker or some disinterested third party must decide.

If the striker make a foul stroke he cannot score, and the next player proceeds from the place where the white or striker's ball stops.

Foul strokes are made in either of the following ways :—If, in making a stroke, the player touches any other ball with his cue hand, or person ; if, in taking aim, he moves his own or another ball by ever so little, with either cue or person ; if, after making his stroke, he touch one of the coloured balls ; if, in a pushing or other stroke, he touches the striking ball more than once. In these cases the striker's ball is replaced as nearly as may be, and the player makes a stroke, but he is not allowed to score.

It has been usual to forfeit a point for a foul stroke ; but the more common and equitable plan is not to allow the player to score. This is now the almost universal rule.

If the player by a fair stroke force one or more of the coloured balls off the table, such balls score just as if they had been pocketed.

If the white or player's ball be struck off the table, one point is forfeited and a ball is spotted.

Both players use the same striking ball, except where only two balls are left on the table. In that case, the player who made the last hazard plays with the white, and his adversary with the coloured ball.

When two balls only remain on the table, the player who holes his own ball or makes a miss loses the game.

These are the principal rules necessary to remember. For any others you must refer to the marker—cases occasionally arising for which it is impossible to provide rules beforehand.

This game is usually played by two persons, though it may be arranged for any number of players. As a game of four it is usually played by partners, each of whom is allowed to give advice to the other. With three or more players it is an amusing game when the stakes are small. I recollect, while on a visit at the seat of Lord —, in Suffolk, we used to play at a capital game, in which ladies and gentlemen commonly joined. The plan was this:—The players strung for choice of lead (or otherwise decided on the order of their play), and the first player broke the mass of balls—the rest playing in succession till the table was cleared; the last ball counting one. The player who obtained the largest number of balls won the game, and received from

each of the other players a penny for every point less than his own. When it happened that two or more players obtained the same number of balls, it was decided that he who obtained the *first four* (or five, six, &c., according to the number of balls forming the pyramid) won the game, and received stakes from those below him; those having the same number as the winner of course saving their stakes.

Let me now endeavour to *improve my text*, as the old divines have it. The game, my dear young friends, is Pyramid Pool. Now, my advice to all young players, when invited by strangers in a public room to "just play a little pool for sixpence a ball or so," is to *avoid it*. For these reasons: *imprimis*; pyramids is essentially a sharper's game. These gentlemen sportsmen make it their special study, and never lose an opportunity of "picking up" any young pigeon who, with more money than wit, thinks he can play a "decentish winning hazard." These professional thieves (I cannot dignify them by the term players) practise daily; and to such perfection have some of them arrived that they can place the playing ball safe under the cushion after almost every successful stroke. As the game is seldom played in a public room for less than sixpence or shilling a ball, with eighteenpence or half-a-crown for the pool, it is possible—and, indeed, very likely—for the tyro to lose eight or ten shillings in a single game. Nor is this all; the sharpening gentry have a clever knack of betting or taking odds on the game; and while ap-

parently offering a fair wager, contrive to fleece the gentleman player who is unfortunate enough to be caught in their traps. I recollect an instance in point. A certain Mr. Wido was playing a game of pyramids with a friend of mine at Hunt's rooms, in the Strand. The game was merely for sixpence a ball and shilling pool ; and the score standing at nine to two in favour of my friend, it was consequently lost to Mr. Wido. There were four balls left on the table ; when says Wido, " I will bet half a sovereign on each of these balls." My friend, flushed with success, took the bet, and the game proceeded thus :— Wido played in an extremely cautious manner till there was a hazard left, which he made immediately, winning the first half sovereign. Instead, however, of going on with the next stroke, he gave a miss close under the most distant cushion, and the ball just taken was replaced on the spot. My friend was thus under the necessity of playing hard at the ball in order to be certain of striking—a plan that could not be otherwise than favourable to his adversary. As soon as another easy hazard would present itself, Wido would not fail to make it, and then give a miss. In this way, alternately taking a ball and giving a miss, the game went on for about half an hour—every such manœuvre winning Wido half a sovereign, minus sixpence for the ball missed, till my friend threw up the game in disgust, with the loss of nearly five pounds and the empty honour of winning the game. He has been more cautious since then of betting with a professional sharp !

This little anecdote is strictly true, and may perhaps act as a caution to gentlemen players in public rooms. Of course it sometimes happens that the sharp gets taken in; but the instances, like angels' visits, are few and far between. There is a way, however, that altogether defeats the machinations of these gentry, even when you are unfortunate enough to play a match with one of them. It is a golden rule, and worth remembering; it is, moreover, easy to remember, as it consists of two words only—DON'T BET!

In pyramids the chief point to be observed is *safety*; the most brilliant hazards are useless without it. Endeavour always to play your ball with such strength as to bring it under the cushion after the stroke is made. There are many exceptions to this rule, however—as when a succession of hazards may be readily accomplished, or when a favourable break occurs after the first hazard. I have often seen six, eight, ten, and even twelve balls taken in a single break, though three or four hazards at a break is usually considered very good play. Pyramids is a game that requires constant practice, strict attention, and good nerves. Like all games, indeed, of mingled skill and chance, the player never gets on well without he can *keep his temper*. There is another game sometimes played, called the *losing pyramid*. In this the player makes losing hazards only: and, whenever his ball is pocketed, he has the privilege of removing from the table any ball he chooses.

To such perfection have some attained in this

game, that it is not at all a rare occurrence to see a player clear the table at a single break. I have done so myself several times, and I have seen a gentleman called Patterson (a dentist in Fleet Street, who, by the way, is far more clever with the forceps than he is with the billiard cue) perform the same feat three times in the course of a single evening's play. Pyramids is a very favourite game with some players; and it is not an uncommon thing for a man to arrive at a high degree of skill in winning hazards, to the almost total neglect of the regular losing hazards and canons of the English game. This has been the case with more than a dozen fine players I could mention. I fear, however, that it is the temptation of the half-crown lives and ten-shilling pools that has led them from the better game. I used to play with a gentleman a few years since who was good at winning hazards, and nothing else. In London he won almost invariably at pyramids. Business or pleasure took him to Paris, where the rooks plucked him till he had scarcely a feather to fly with. Again I say, *beware of a good player at pyramids*. But for fear of the law of libel, I could name a score of so-called "gentlemen players," who frequent the public rooms of the Strand and Fleet Street, with whom it would be dangerous to come in contact at pyramids, though at the English game they are harmless enough. Old Cornelius (who was once a fine player himself, and had a son extremely clever) tells me that he has seen a hundred pounds dropped at pyramids for every sovereign lost at the English game.

My friend, Michael Angelo Titmarsh, who, as I before hinted, knows a little about billiards as well as other more useful things, quotes an Italian proverb as a warning lesson to all novices at pyramids: "*Tidarsi è bene, e non fidarse è meglio*"—which, being translated into familiar English, tells us that "Mistrust is the mother of safety." I am very fond of the game myself; but I really think my sponsor is right.

CHAPTER XII.

POOL.

IN clubs and public rooms pool is the most generally played game. The other billiard games are played by two or four persons only ; but pool affords amusement for a dozen. Consisting as it does entirely of winning hazards, very little practice will enable an amateur to play at it without great risk. In point of variety it yields, however, to the English game at billiards.

There are many ways of playing pool—as, for instance, playing with as many balls as there are players : playing with two balls only, each player striking with the ball last played at ; striking the nearest ball ; striking the last player's ball ; or playing at any ball on the table, as at pyramids ; but the game that is the most popular, and, in fact, the only one that is practised in England, is what is commonly known as POOL, in which each player has a ball of a particular colour, with which he plays upon the last striker, or, when the latter is in hand, at the nearest ball.

Pool may be played by two or more persons. It is occasionally played by twelve or fourteen ; but a six or seven pool is considered the best game. The colours of the balls are shown on a marking board ; and at starting each player has three lives. The game is usually played for a small stake on each ball and a pool, to which each player contributes. Eightpenny pool and sixpenny lives is the game most usual in public

rooms ; half-crown pool and shilling lives is most common at the clubs—the charge for the table being *always* taken out of the pool.

The marker or other person collects the pool and gives out the balls from a basket or bag. When each player is provided with a ball, the white is placed on the spot, and the game proceeds in the following order :—

Red plays upon.....	White.
Yellow ”	Red.
Blue ”	Yellow.
Brown ”	Blue.
Black ”	Brown.
White ”	Black.
Spot white ”	White.
Spot red ”	Spot white.
Spot yellow ”	Spot red.
Spot blue ”	Spot yellow.
Spot brown ”	Spot blue.
Spot black ”	Spot brown.

And so alternately, according to the number of the players. I have given this list of the colours and the order of playing as that most usually observed. It is common for the marker to call out to each player whose turn it is to play—

“ Red (or any other colour, as the case may be) plays upon white, and yellow is your play, sir ;” but it is well to know the order of the balls for yourself.

The player whose turn it is to play strikes at the last player’s ball, and endeavours to place it in a pocket. If he succeeds in pocketing the ball, he plays at the nearest ball, and goes on till he fails in taking a ball, when the next player

plays upon him—and so on throughout the game. The last player left in claims the pool, except where the last two players have an equal number of lives, when the pool is divided between them—technically known as a “division.”

With this general explanation, we may go at once to the most commonly observed

RULES FOR THE GAME OF POOL.

1. Each player has three lives at starting, and plays in the order shown on the marking board.

2. The first player strikes from the baulk semicircle at the white ball on the spot, and if he does not succeed in holing it, the next player strikes at his ball. If, after taking a life, there be no other ball on the table, the striker spots his ball, and the next player goes on.

3. The baulk is no protection, the striker being allowed to play at any ball within the baulk when that happens to be the ball next in order of play.

4. When the striker has succeeded in pocketing a ball, he plays at the ball nearest his own ; but if the player's ball be in hand, he plays at the ball nearest to the baulk spot.

5. When any doubt arises as to the nearest ball, it is the marker's business to measure the distance ; and his decision is final.

6. All disputes to be settled by the marker, or by the majority of the company. When the distances are declared by the marker to be equal, then the owners of the balls must draw lots as to which striker shall play on.

7. The striker *loses* a life in any of the following ways:—If he misses the ball played at; or loses his own ball in a pocket; or runs a coup; or forces his own ball over the table; or plays at or with the wrong ball; or plays out of his turn. In each of these cases he pays the price of the life to the owner of the ball he played at.

Exceptions.—The player does not lose a life when he has been told by the marker (or other person having charge of the game) to play at a wrong ball; or when he takes a wrong ball from a pocket by mistake for his own; or in any case where he is misled by the marker, or any of the other players. In these instances it is usual to allow the player to retain his life, but he cannot claim a life from the ball played on should he hole it.

8. The player *gains* a life for every ball he pockets, claiming the stake of the owner of the ball.

9. If after pocketing the ball played at, the striker lose his own ball by running into a pocket, or forcing it off the table, *he*, and not the person played at, loses a life. In each case the ball pocketed is played from the baulk when its turn comes.

10. If the player force the ball he plays at over the table, he *gains* a life; but if he force his own ball off, he *loses* a life.

11. The striker may have any ball taken up that is in the way of his arm or hand, or that interferes with his playing a full fair stroke at the right ball.

It has been usual to say that a ball is not to be removed if the striker can hit any part of the object ball. This is not now observed.

12. If the striker's ball be angled, he may have any (or all) of the balls removed from the table, to allow him to play bricole from the cushion.

In some rooms the angled ball is allowed to be moved out of the corner, when the striker plays for safety, he being not allowed to take a life. This appears to be a very fair plan.

13. The first player who loses his three lives has the privilege of purchasing what is called a *star*, by paying into the pool the same sum as his original stake. For this he receives lives equal to the lowest number on the marking board.

14. Only one star is allowed in a pool.

15. If the first person out refuse to star, the next player out has the option ; and if he refuse, the next player out, and so on. But if only two players be left in the pool without a star, no purchase can be allowed.

16. *Foul strokes*.—If, in the act of striking, the player touch any other ball than his own, he makes a foul stroke, and cannot take a life ; if, with such a stroke, he pocket a ball, the owner of that ball does not lose a life, and the ball is considered to be in hand till it is the owner's turn to play.

It is usual in some rooms to replace the ball so holed upon the spot from which it was

struck. This I consider a bad plan, as it is almost impossible to replace the ball exactly in its former position.

If the striker touch his own or any other ball with either cue or person, he makes a foul stroke and cannot take a life.

17. No player has a right to touch any ball but his own after a miss. If, after a miss, the ball be stopped or taken up before it has done rolling, the owner of the ball may claim a life from the person so stopping it.

The obvious fairness of this rule is seen at once when only two players are left in the pool.

18. If, after a hazard, the striker should touch or remove his own ball from the table, he cannot claim a life, as his own ball might possibly have run into a pocket.

It is common in some rooms to take up a ball after a miss before it touches any other ball. This is manifestly unfair, as it might possibly reach the ball first played for.

19. If before a star two or more balls should have been pocketed by one stroke, the owner of the ball first struck (each player having one life) may claim the star; should he refuse, the other two players may draw lots for the star.

20. Should the striker's ball stop on the place from which another ball has been removed, it must be allowed to remain, and the former ball be played in its turn from the baulk.

This rule is subject to some variation. In some rooms the ball is replaced on the spot from which it was taken as soon as there

be room for it. The former plan I consider the best ; but Thurston and others prefer the latter.

21. If the striker should have had his next player's ball removed, and afterwards stop on the spot it occupied, the latter may give a miss from baulk without losing a life.

22. The last two players in a pool divide whenever their lives be equal ; the last player who takes a life being entitled to a stroke.

23. If, when three players, each having one life, remain in the pool, the striker makes a miss, the other two divide without a stroke.

Here, again, it is evident that the rule is a good one, as, if the next player could play after a miss, a game might be *sold* by one player for the advantage of another.

24. All disputes to be decided by the marker ; or if he be interested in the game either as a player, by betting, &c., the point in question must be settled by the majority of the company.

These are the principal rules that need to be remembered, though many others might have been given ; nor is it necessary to give the rules for the other pool games, as they are seldom or never played in this country. Let me, however, venture upon a little advice to amateurs wishful to join in this game. In the first place, *Don't bet with strangers*. Secondly, Always play for safety, if there be no probable hazard on the ball played at. Thirdly, Be careful to see where your player is situated ; as, if he be in the centre of the table, it would often be more judicious to lay

yourself under the cushion than to attempt a difficult stroke. Fourthly, Prudence divides more pools than pluck, though pluck occasionally beats prudence. Fifthly, In playing at a ball on the spot be careful to use such strength as will leave your ball a good distance from your player. Sixthly, Always give your player a good wide berth, if possible. Seventhly, But when your player lies close under a cushion, then play boldly at the object ball. Eighthly, Don't star one life against two threes without the threes happen to be worse players than yourself. Ninthly, lastly, and most important of all—KEEP YOUR TEMPER.

Now, after these nine "ly's," it won't be necessary for me to say much more. Pool is a game in which an indifferent player may join without much risk, if the stakes be not very high. I have known many amateurs to divide with first-class men, and all by virtue of careful play. If you leave yourself under or near the cushion, the chances are greatly against your losing a life, because your player, however skilful he may be, has to look to the safety of his own ball, which he will not needlessly endanger for a doubtful stroke. When the game is reduced to two or three players, you need to be more careful than ever, as a single mistake may lose you all chance of the pool; but by prudence, I don't mean timidity, any more than I would advocate rashness under the name of bold strong play—hard hitting is not often necessary at pool—a firm, even stroke, just hard enough to carry your ball to the cushion after contact with the object

ball, is the best and safest ; though sometimes it is necessary to bring your ball back again to the baulk after the stroke, in which case a little side, judiciously put on, will be found highly useful. But the side stroke need not be brought prominently forward in this game, though both it and the screw are occasionally found very useful. In some situations—as, for instance, when your own ball lies in the midst of several others, and a good break presents itself—boldness rather than caution is desirable. Take notice also of the style of play adopted by your antagonist, and play accordingly. *Fas est et ab hoste doceri.*

In some of the clubs and public rooms it is usual to play for very high stakes. Now, although I have frequently played at pound and crown pool, I disapprove of high stakes as a rule, as, where the risk is great, that sociability and good humour which constitute the heart and soul of the game, is endangered, if not altogether destroyed. When billiards comes to be played for money, and money only, the game is a labour, and not a pleasure. Indeed, I am very doubtful whether all the games on the billiard table would not be better played without a penny stake upon them. I have known young men entirely ruined by billiards. But on this and some other points I shall have something to say in my next chapter ; when, remembering the old proverb, *Decies repetita placebit*, I shall attempt a review of billiards as it is played in England.

CHAPTER XIII.

A RESUME OF THE FOREGOING CHAPTERS.

FREQUENTLY, during the passage of these desultory papers through the press, have I been requested to give my opinion on such and such a player's mode of play; but I have steadily resisted the temptation to become too personal in my remarks, preferring rather to render assistance to the tyro than to provide the player with matter for scandal or gossip. As I said in my first chapter, my instructions are intended for the amateur, not for the professor. It would have been easy to have given a greater number of diagrams, and to have swelled my remarks to twice or thrice their length—to have rivalled, in fact, the books written, years ago, by Messrs. White, Mardon, and Kentfield; but such a plan would neither have been useful to those for whom I have written nor have met the wishes of the conductors of the Journal in which this treatise originally appeared. In taking leave therefore, of my readers, I have only to touch upon some few subjects already slightly adverted to, and so close.

The following *notanda* will, it is hoped, be found useful to all *amateurs* in billiards, and perhaps to not a few *players*. Billiards, to be played well, must be practised scientifically. It is of no use knocking the balls about without knowing "the reason why"—a child may soon be taught to do that; and of as little use is it to acquire facility in handling the cue, without at the same time learning to make the different strokes that occur in every game with such strength and judgment as will leave another stroke or a series of strokes to follow. The main art of billiards consists, not so much in the making of any particularly difficult strokes, as in playing with such a degree of strength as will enable you to make a succession of strokes. The break by which the amateur adds three or four to

his score grows, in the hands of the practised player, into fifty or sixty, or even more ; and this, too, not by virtue of any very extraordinarily fine strokes, but simply in consequence of the scientific knowledge that enables him to keep a succession of hazards and canons on the table. To acquire this knowledge it is necessary to practise with a marker or a good player pretty frequently, to watch the effect of certain strokes, and to apportion the strength of your play by the nature of the cushion. An hour's practice with a good player is, I honestly confess, worth all my teaching on paper ; the purpose of the latter being to give the amateur that theoretical knowledge without which his practice can lead but to imperfect results after all.

There are some hazards that cannot but occur in every game. Take the losing hazard in the middle pocket, for instance. It is very easy to make, and may be made either by putting side on your own ball, or by dividing the object ball. But it is not sufficient to make the single hazard. You must learn so to place your own ball in baulk as to make the hazard easy, and at the same time to bring the object ball back from the top cushion so as to leave another hazard in the same or the opposite pocket. From a situation of this kind a great score is often made by a good player. If you wish to acquire facility in this or any other stroke, you must practise it daily, till you have conquered its difficulties and become acquainted with the strength necessary in order to make it. The strength of modern cushions does not materially vary, so that when you have learned to make half a dozen losing hazards on one table, you will not find it difficult to repeat the experiment on another.

Of course, the position of the object ball must be taken into consideration in attempting the losing hazard in the middle pocket from baulk. If the object ball lies rather below the line of the pocket, then the ordinary angle will be sufficient without side ; half an inch above that will require a little side ; a ball in a direct straight line from the pocket requires a full, strong ball from the farther spot ; a quarter of

an inch higher, and then strength and side will be necessary ; half an inch, and then the losing hazard cannot be made without screw. So that you see all lies within the compass of an inch or two. A ball a couple of inches above the centre line of the table will be unsafe to play for the middle pockets, and the losing hazard in the top pocket presents the most favourable chances of scoring and making a break. Attention to these little things constitutes all the difference between a player and an amateur. I have seen a good break made from a ball lying just over the middle pocket, by a series of very slightly touched hazards ; so slight, indeed, as to move the object ball only about half an inch with every successive stroke. Indeed, when a losing hazard in the side or top pockets presents itself, much judgment is required ; if you play it too hard, you will bring the object ball into the baulk and so lose the chance of another score ; and if you play it too gently, you may perhaps miss your hazard altogether and open the game for your adversary. *Medio tutissimus ibis.*

The place of the balls on the table after the stroke is often as important to observe as the strokes themselves. When two hazards lie equally open, it is not good play always to make the easiest one first. A single glance will inform you in such cases which to strike first, if you recollect that the true plan is to bring the balls together after reverberation, so as to leave another stroke. For example: Two hazards present themselves for the centre pocket. Your ball being in hand, you must play for the hazard that shall bring the object ball back to the opposite cushion : so that not only do you secure the losing hazard off the other ball for the second stroke, but an easy canon is left for the third, and so on, through a break of any length. The true player is not content with simply making the hazard or canon before him ; he often attempts a very difficult stroke, so as to bring the balls into play, makes the break as long as he can without danger, and then defends the game by playing for safety when no further score is on the table.

Again, how very often does the "spot stroke" occur—the red on the spot and your own ball lying before it, so as to present a nearly straight hazard in the corner pocket. No stroke is so easy as this, and yet how few players take advantage of it. Just a little side put on your ball, with strength enough to carry the red into the pocket, will give you the hazard in the opposite corner, from a precisely similar position of the two balls. I have seen fifteen or twenty winning hazards made from this break, the red ball being lodged in one or other of the corner pockets, and then spotted. The plan is to strike your ball with side and strength enough to carry it a little way only beyond the spot *in a line with the pocket to be next played for*; that is the only difficulty. It is easy enough to make the *one* winning hazard; to make a succession of such hazards requires judgment and nice play. There is another but less certain plan of making this stroke, which is by drawing back your ball with a slight screw, and playing always for one pocket. In some situations—as, for instance, when your opponent's ball is lying under the cushion near to the pocket played for—it is the preferable mode of playing the stroke; but I like the other best, both as being less dangerous if you happen to miss the hazard, and as being much more easily accomplished; for, should your ball chance to lodge *on* the spot instead of *behind* it, the red ball would have to be placed on the centre spot, and your break would be lost.

The red ball being on the spot, and your own lying near to the cushion in the corner, it is easy to make a six stroke—the losing hazard in the corner pocket and the red in the middle; but you must be careful, in making this stroke, that you secure the losing hazard, as the red is almost certain to be left in the neighbourhood of one of the middle pockets, when, if your opponent is at the baulk end of the table, he obtains the break instead of you. This stroke should be as easy as the corresponding hazard in baulk, and should never be missed; yet I find that the majority of players make the baulk hazard, and double the object ball into or

near the centre pocket, while they miss the top pocket hazard. How is this? Why, simply because they play the regular angle for the baulk stroke, and divide the object ball, while for the top pocket they put on side where it is not wanted. As I have often said, the side stroke is highly useful in its proper place—and *only there*. Why go through the back streets and alleys when the straight road is the nearest and the safest?

In making canons, too, I have noticed that most amateurs play much too hard, or they put on side where it is not wanted; or they neglect to use the check (or reverse) side in its proper place, or screw too much or too little. All that is necessary in order to make the ordinary canons that present themselves in the English game, is that your ball should reach and slightly pass the second ball struck, by which style of play another canon would most probably be left. It is always considered better play to make the canon than the hazard when both are equally easy, because it is less difficult to calculate the place of the object ball from the canon than the hazard; besides which, your having to play from baulk may altogether spoil a promising break. On the other hand, situations often occur in which the hazard would be better play than the canon, as the object ball would be thereby brought near to the red, and so leave the chance of a good break. In fact, it is extremely difficult to place the balls in such a position as to leave neither a hazard nor a canon; and, in the majority of instances, a careful player will be able to place the balls advantageously for the succeeding stroke.

In cases where close canon occurs, it is good play to keep the two balls before your own by a very slight and easy stroke. I have seen Roberts, Kentfield, "Oxford Jonathan," Stammers, George Davis, Hitchin, Green, Tabley, Richards, and other professional players, nurse the balls with such skill and nicety of aim as to make from a dozen to twenty consecutive canons, and yet never leave more than three or four inches between any of the balls. On one occasion, particularly, I recollect seeing a player drive the two balls right

round the table by a succession of neatly executed canons. I afterwards tried the same kind of stroke myself, and found it easy to place one ball before the other in a series of short angles, so as to make an infinite number of canons. A little practice will soon show you the quantity of side and division necessary in order to prevent the balls getting too wide apart; and very useful such strokes are, I assure you, for there is scarcely a game in which the balls do not fall close together, so as to leave an easy slow canon. Be certain, however, that you *do* make the canon, and not, as I have seen some players, just reach up to the balls and there stop, as in that case you leave the little one for your opponent to nurse—a kind of thing by no means pleasant if you happen to have any money at stake on the game.

It is better always to play for some definite object than to merely take the chances of the table. Luck is a very pleasant thing, but science always beats it in the long run. Hard hitting *may* force your ball into some unexpected pocket; but care and prudence, if they do not accomplish the object intended by the player, never, or very seldom, endanger their possessor's game. But I would not encourage a timid style of play, than which nothing is so fatal to success. The true artist unites confidence to watchfulness.

In the losing hazards in the top corner pockets, from baulk too, it is necessary sometimes to play with sufficient strength either to bring the object ball down to the bottom cushion and back again to the centre of the table, or to leave another hazard in the top pocket. It is difficult to say which is the best play, so much depends on the position of your opponent's ball—supposing you to be playing with the red—and on the average strength with which you are in the habit of playing. It is a bad plan to vary your strength unnecessarily. Some strokes require a slow, others a fast ball; but, in the majority of cases, it is sufficient to bring the object ball about half way down the table after the losing hazard. One of the most mischievous consequences of an amateur teaching him-

self is the habit he gets into of playing too strongly. What I should advise is, that every one who wishes to become an adept at the game should take occasional lessons of a good player. For this purpose, I may conscientiously recommend Mr. Richards, at the King's Head, in Old Change, of the tables at which tavern he has lately become proprietor—he is a civil fellow and a good player; "Pat," at Goode's, on Ludgate-hill; Walter, the late marker at the Bell Tavern, Fleet-street, who, though but a youth, is a remarkably fine player; the marker at "The Shades," Saville House, Leicester-square; Mr. Gent, or his marker, at his rooms in the Bay Tree, St. Swithin's-lane; "Dick," at Stebbings', Turnwheel-lane, Cannon-street; the marker at Wainwright's Rooms, Fore-street, Finsbury-pavement; Mr. Pullen, or his marker, 198, Fleet-street; the marker at Hunt's Rooms, in the Strand; "George," at the University Rooms, in the Strand; or, in fact, any marker you happen to know to be a good-natured, patient, and honest fellow. There is a billiard-room in an unfashionable end of the town, kept by a young man called Bradlaugh, who is a civil fellow, over against the Saracen's Head Tavern, Aldgate. Here you may see some very fine play occasionally, as well as capital pool and pyramids; as you may also at Mrs. Page's, the Fountain, in the Minories, the marker at which table is a very good player, who understands and practises the side stroke exceedingly well. Many other markers might be mentioned, some at the east and others at the west end of London; but those I have named will be found both good players and obliging men, in whose hands you are at least safe from being robbed by bets and cramp strokes.

If you want a quiet game, you may find very good tables at Pullen's, Fleet-street; Gardner's, the One Tun, St. Martin's-court, Ludgate-hill; Goode's, Ludgate-hill; Stebbings', Cannon-street; Pratt's, in Regent-street; Marsh's, 251, Strand; Winsor's old rooms, 252, Strand; White's, Picket-street, Strand; the Elephant and Castle, corner of Walworth-road; the Old Manor

House, Camberwell-road; the Angel, at Stratford; and at Mr. Finglas's, in the Old Jewry. There is also very good play occasionally at the Eagle Tavern, in the City-road, where two tables are placed in one of the best billiard-rooms in London. The marker here (who, I believe, rents the tables of Mr. Conquest) is a really fine player, and a quiet, gentlemanly fellow in the bargain. Out of town it would be difficult—outside the walls of a country house—to say where the best tables are to be found, good and bad ones being equally common. In Brighton, however, Jonathan's rooms bear the palm; and in Manchester and Liverpool, Roberts's rooms are the best frequented. It is not necessary to particularize other tables; though, if any of my readers should chance to visit Paris, a look into the rooms about the Palais Royale and the Boulevard des Italiennes will take a wrinkle or two out of their eyes with regard to the canon game.

It is an axiom in billiards that all strokes are fair that are made with the point of the cue; some exception must, however, be taken to this rule. It is not a fair stroke when the point of the cue passes the legitimate point of contact with the object ball; it is not a fair stroke when the point of the cue is pushed forward in such a way as to touch the cushion or ball beyond the object ball, &c.; but in all such cases, when they occur, the *marker's decision must be considered final*, except where he is interested in the game, when the opinion of the majority of the company present must be taken.

In making the Jenny much more depends on the placing of the striker's ball, and its proper degree of strength, than on the point of surface at which the object ball is struck; indeed, this remark applies to nearly all strokes made from the baulk when the player's ball is in hand. An inch or two more to the right or left will make all the difference between a successful break and a single hazard. I cannot illustrate my position without a diagram; but a few strokes made at a ball lying well for the Jenny in the middle pocket will soon show the amateur where a

stroke from the centre of the baulk will bring the object ball, so that he can easily vary the position of the striking ball and the strength of his play, according to the place of the ball played upon.

In low strokes, again, many tyros fail by playing *too low*. It is necessary, in playing for a stop ball, not only to play low, but also to accompany the stroke with that peculiar drawback motion I have already attempted to describe. This stroke any marker will show you; for markers, generally speaking, like nothing so well as instructing their patrons. Take their instructions, and pay for them if need be, but do not play with them except for practice—unless, indeed, you know them to be honest fellows. If you bet with the majority of them, the chances are about a guinea to a gooseberry that you lose. I must tell you, too, that a ball may be made to travel nearly as fast with a low stroke as with a high one, provided enough side be judiciously applied. Too many young players imagine that a low stroke necessarily has a tendency to retard the ball, when, in fact, it is the sudden stopping or following of the cue at and after the ball that causes it to either go fast or slow, or stop altogether on contact with the object ball, or to return to the hand of the player.

Many games are lost for want of a sufficient regard to safety. It is sometimes—nay, often—better play to give a miss under the cushion than to attempt a doubtful hazard. Remember, too, that the game is never entirely over till the marker calls "Game!" and that the man who is ahead in the score is seldom so careful as he should be. He presumes upon his luck; it is your task to take his presumption out of him. Watch the style of your adversary's play carefully. If you find him good at canons rather than hazards, leave your ball and the red as wide apart as possible, with his ball between, if you can—for even the best players fail occasionally in long or cushion canons. If, on the contrary, you find that he makes winning better than losing hazards, be careful to leave the red under a cushion on the conclusion of your break. An

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open game is all very well among friends ; but to win you must defend your game when you are behind in the score and the stake is important. "Watch and wait" is a good motto for a billiard player. Many an apparently lost game has been recovered by carefully defending it till a good opening has occurred for a break. The red ball more usually presents chances for hazards than the white ; but when it is safe, and you are ahead of your opponent, leave it alone. I have generally found it better to keep banging away at the white than to disturb the red when I have had the best of the game. But, on the contrary, when I have had the worst, I play at the red, and leave my opponent the chances of any canons or hazards that may be left ; my object being, of course, in the one case to open the game, and in the other to keep it to myself. As I have more than once said, "Score all you can with certainty, and then leave the balls as safe as possible for your opponent."

Another very common cause of failure among young players is the uncertainty with which they play, sometimes with a high, and sometimes with a low stroke, in order to accomplish the same object. In the generality of cases the centre stroke is all that is necessary, putting on a little side, or dividing the object ball, as may appear requisite. Do not vary your ordinary style of play, except where the case appears absolutely to demand it, nor attempt difficult and brilliant strokes where common canons and hazards would do as well. Striking at the wrong ball by way of experiment, and such like absurdities, is also a frequent cause of failure. When your opponent's ball is off the table, it is better to sacrifice a point and keep the baulk, than attempt a doubtful hazard at the red ; and if it be not possible to bring both balls in baulk, then the next best play is to lay the red in safety under the cushion, and run gently into baulk with your own ball. If your opponent is safely tucked up under a cushion, it seems a pity to disturb him, especially if there be any play at all at the red. As he is obliged to play his stroke from a cramped posi-

tion, the chances are that he will leave a hazard or canon; but do not attempt roundabout canons, when any other mode of play is open. It is also well to observe that most red winning hazards may be made with good strength, so as to bring the ball away from the pocket in case of failure; while, if it be necessary to hole your adversary, let the stroke be only just strong enough to carry him to the pocket, so that, if you fail to make the hazard, he may be left under the cushion. But I hold it as a golden rule *never to pocket my adversary's ball while there remains any other way of scoring.*

I shall not tire my reader's patience by any further hint, rule, or piece of advice, other than this:— Always notice well the position of the balls before you strike, and calculate the places they will occupy after the stroke. Only by close observation and practice can you conquer the difficulties of the strength necessary to make and keep a good break. *Nothing tends to render a game so secure as a judicious anticipation of the probable consequences of every stroke.* No sleight of hand in the finish of the game can compensate for a neglect of this rule.

CHAPTER XIV.

HINTS ON BETTING.

As I have several times spoken of betting, and as betting is a very common accompaniment to billiards, I may as well give the following few

RULES FOR THE GUIDANCE OF WAGERS ON BILLIARDS.

In a game of fifty between even players, the odds are—

At 5 love, 10 to 9 in favour of the striker.

10	”	10 — 7	”	”
15	”	10 — 6	”	”
25	”	2 — 1	”	”
30	”	3 — 1	”	”
40	”	4 — 1	”	”

Above 40, any odds.

At 10 to 5 the odds are 7 to 6 in favour of striker.

15 — 10	”	7 — 5	”	”
20 — 15	”	4 — 4	”	”
30 — 20	”	3 — 2	”	”
40 — 20	”	2 — 1	”	”
45 — 30	”	3 — 1	”	”

In a game of fifty, the striker giving ten points, and the betting supposed to be even at starting, the odds are—

At 10 to 10 ... 7 to 4 in his favour.

20 — 15 ...	2 — 1	”
30 — 20 ...	5 — 2	”
40 — 30 ...	3 — 1	”

In a game of fifty, the striker giving fifteen points, the betting being even at starting—

At 15 to 15 the odds in his favour are 5 to 4

20 — 15	”	”	3 — 2
30 — 20	”	”	2 — 1

At 35 to 20	the odds in his favour	are	3 to 1
40 — 20	”	”	4 — 1
40 — 30	”	”	3 — 1
40 — 45	”	”	2 — 1
35 — 45	”	”	even
30 — 45	”	”	1 — 2
25 — 45	”	”	1 — 4

In a game of fifty, the striker giving twenty, and the betting supposed to be even at starting—

At 5 to 25	the odds are	2 to 3	in his favour
10 — 25	”	even	”
20 — 25	”	2 to 1	”
30 — 25	”	3 — 1	”
35 — 25	”	4 — 1	”
40 — 30	”	4 — 1	”
45 — 40	”	5 — 1	”
45 — 45	”	2 — 1	”
40 — 45	”	2 — 3	”
35 — 45	”	2 — 5	”
30 — 45	”	2 — 6	”
20 — 45	”	2 — 8	”

and so on in proportion; but I think the betting is generally in favour of the player who gives the points.

In a game of a hundred between even players, the betting is in the same proportion as in a game of fifty, except that in a long game I should prefer backing the more careful player of the two.

In a game of a hundred, the striker giving ten, fifteen, or twenty points, the betting is in about the same proportion as in a game of fifty, except that the longer the game the greater the chance for the player who gives odds.

In a game of a hundred, the striker giving forty² the betting is

Love 40	... ..	even
10 to 40	.....	7 to 6
20 — 40	.....	3 — 2
40 — 40	.....	2 — 1

60 to 40	.....	3 to 1
70 — 40	.....	any odds
20 — 60	.....	even
40 — 80	.....	1 to 2
45 — 85	.....	1 — 3
50 — 90	.....	1 — 3
60 — 90	.....	2 — 5
70 — 95	.....	1 — 2
85 — 95	..... ..	even

In a game of this kind the odds must vary, not so much with the score as with the known fact of the player being able to make a great score from a favourable opening. Few men would give such odds as forty out of a hundred if they did not possess the ability to score from twenty to thirty at a break : so that the betting must always be governed by the skill of the several players. There is, besides skill, another element that enters into all such matches—which is the fact that the amateur does not play his full game in presence of his opponent's superior science. In billiards, as in all other games of mingled skill and chance, the temper of the player must more or less advance or prejudice his game. If he is nervous and frightened, he had better not play with his masters in the game—especially for money ; but if he wishes to succeed as a player, there is no way of acquiring the requisite talent so good as paying for it. You know the old proverb—“ Experience bought is better than taught.” Well, you must buy your experience ; only be careful that you do not pay too dearly for it.

No rules can be given as to odds between a player and an amateur ; but the luck of the table will give the latter about fifteen points : if he plays tolerably hard at the balls, the bets must be made accordingly.

All bets offered and taken are to be considered as made.

When a player offers odds, the taker may, if he pleases, require him to stake.

It is usual to pay all bets at the conclusion of each game.

In disputed games, the stakeholder, if there be one,

must take the sense of the company as to the bets before paying over the money to either party ; and, in the event of their declining to decide, he must return the stakes to the several parties.

One ball at pyramids is equivalent to five points in fifty at billiards between even players.

Two balls at pyramids are equivalent to fifteen in fifty at billiards.

Three balls at pyramids are equivalent to twenty in fifty at billiards.

One pocket to five between even players is equal to about fifteen points.

Canons against hazards between equal players are equivalent to about twenty-five in fifty.

Canons against canons and hazards between equal players are equivalent to about thirty in fifty.

Winning hazards and canons against losing hazards and canons, between even players, is equal to giving the latter five points.

A hundred and fifty against fifty is equal to about sixty in a hundred, or thirty-five in fifty. The betting in such a game must of course depend on the known skill of the players.

In betting odds, the rules usual to horse-racing govern billiards ; as, for instance, if odds be given and it be afterwards agreed to draw the bet, the money must be put together and divided.

It is usual for strangers to stake, if the bet be over a shilling or half a crown, or the takers can refuse to complete the wager.

A bet once offered may be taken by anyone in the room before the next stroke be made.

In this place I may perhaps be allowed to offer a few words of caution to young players as to betting. Many a player is in the habit of offering bets he never intends to take. Have nothing to do with him. When you see a man place the balls in apparently awkward positions, and then say he will take ten to one, or such and such long odds, that he will make the canon, hazard, and so on, always conclude at once that he has practised the stroke long enough to make it almost a

certainty, and don't be tempted into offering him the wager. When he fails to obtain the bet, you will find that he will presently make the stroke just to show you how easy it is; but do not you be green enough to take odds that you do it yourself. If you have never seen it before, you will be sure to lose. Canons round the table, drawing the ball back by a great screw, losing and winning hazards from balls under the cushions, canons from the red on the spot to the white on the baulk spot, winning and losing hazards from baulk off the red on the spot, pocketing two balls placed over the corner pockets by one stroke, various ways of placing the balls for strokes of eight or ten—these are the usual traps that are set to catch the unwary. Don't be persuaded by any offers of favourable bets to put your foot into them. Nevertheless, they are all good things enough to know, as, once seen, you can judge of the prudence and honesty of betting men at billiards. Avoid the man who offers to play you with one hand, or to back his walking-stick against your cue.

There is another class of bets which it is as well perhaps to avoid—bets that depend upon some trick, like laying one cue on the table as a guide for the ball and striking with the other, raising the cloth with a pin, or blowing on the ball for a canon, placing a hat over one ball and pocketing another by striking the hat, putting a ball over each pocket and betting against an amateur pocketing them all without losing himself or giving a miss, jumping a ball over a certain space, or from one table to another, and such-like discreditable ways of winning money of green young men. I merely glance at this subject, and, without pretending to hold myself higher than other men, pronounce all such practices as totally unworthy of billiard players, to say nothing of gentlemen. A fair bet on a game, or on a point of skill or science, is all very well; but when money is attempted to be made in a billiard room by trick and fraud, the parties to either should be unceremoniously kicked out, as unworthy to sit in the same room with gentlemen and men of honour.

IT IS BEST, PERHAPS, NOT TO BET AT ALL; but on that point *de gustibus non est disputandum*.

One of my critics says, that "with Captain Crawley betting is a *principle*." He evidently did not read the last sentence.

CHAPTER XV.

THURSTON'S RULES FOR THE VARIOUS GAMES.

THE following rules are generally observed in all the clubs and public rooms. I have inserted them here for reference in cases of dispute. The rules issued by the other eminent table makers—Willoughby & Co., Burroughs & Watts, Pullan, Smith, White, Hunt, &c.—do not differ materially from these. As I have already, in speaking of the several games, explained how these rules are to be construed, it is unnecessary for me to do more than remark that questions must occasionally arise for which no printed rules can be found. In all such cases the dispute must be settled by the marker, or by the majority of the company. With regard to the peculiar excellence of each maker's tables, cues, balls, &c., I have nothing to say. I have played on tables and with cues by all the best makers; but should consider it altogether *infra dig.* to recommend the wares of any particular house above those of another.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS.

1. If a player, in the act of striking, touch his ball with the mace or cue, it is considered a stroke.
2. If the striker should accidentally touch or move his own ball without intending at the same time to make a stroke, he loses no point; but the adversary may, if he choose, put the ball back in the place where it stood.
3. All strokes made with the point of the cue are fair, except the balls touch.
4. If a ball be found to have been changed during the course of the game, and it be not known by which player, the game must be played out with the balls as they are.
5. Anyone who leaves the game before it is finished, and will not play it out, loses it.

6. Every person ought attentively to listen for the stroke before he opens the door of a billiard room.

7. All CRAMP games must be played sixteen up.

8. A LOVE game is when no *hazard* is made.

9. In stringing for the lead, the ball is to be played from within the semicircle, usually described in the centre of the baulk line, at the lower end of the table.

10. The player, in stringing for the lead, or when his ball is in hand, must stand having both his feet within the limits of the corner of the table, and must not place his ball beyond the baulk line; he must then strike his ball against the cushion, and the person who brings his ball nearest to the cushion at the lower or baulk end of the table, wins the LEAD and the choice of balls.

11. A person cannot score if he make a foul stroke.

It is called foul if a striker move a ball in the act of striking; or if he play with the wrong ball; or if he touch his own ball twice in playing; or if he strike a ball whilst it is running; or if he touch another ball; or if both his feet are off the floor when playing. The penalty in all these cases is, breaking the balls and losing the lead.

Breaking the balls is placing them on the table as at the commencement of the game.

N.B. Enforcing the penalty for a foul stroke is entirely at the option of the adversary.

12. No person has a right to OFFER advice to the players during the progress of the game, But if a person be APPEALED to by one of the players, or by the marker, he has THEN a right to give an opinion, whether he be interested in the game or not; and if a spectator see the game marked wrong, he has a right to mention it, provided he does it before the next stroke is made, but not afterwards.

13. No person has a right to take up his ball without the permission of his adversary.

14. If a striker miss his ball, in attempting to make a stroke, it is to be considered an accident, and he may try again.

15. If the striker's ball stand on the edge of the

pocket, and in playing it off he causes it to go in, he loses three points.

16. If a ball, standing on the edge of a pocket, should fall in before or when the striker has delivered his ball from his mace or cue, so as to have no chance for his stroke, both balls must be placed in the position in which they originally stood, and the striker must play again.

17. When the adversary's ball is in hand, and the two remaining balls are either upon or below the line, where the white balls are originally placed in leading, it is called a **BAULK**, and the striker who is to play from the ring must strike one of the cushions outside the line, so as to occasion his ball, in returning, to hit one of the balls within the line: if not, he loses one point.

18. If the striker play both balls at the same time, from his mace or butt, so that they touch each other, it is a foul stroke.

19. All disputes to be referred to the marker. No person should give an opinion as to whether a stroke be **FAIR** or **FOUL**, unless appealed to by the parties playing; and no one should in any way interfere with the game except when the marker cannot decide a dispute; in which case reference may be made to the bystanders.

20. The marker should be careful to make those persons who do not play stand from the table, and give room for the players to pass freely round.

The White Winning Game.—This game is twelve in number.

1. In commencing the game, string for the lead, as in Rules 9 and 10, General Directions.

2. After the first person has strung for the lead, if his adversary who follows him make his ball touch the other, or hole his own, he loses the lead.

N.B. This and the following rule are equally applicable to the two other games.

3. If the leader follow his ball, with either mace or cue, beyond the middle pocket, it is no lead, and his

adversary may, if he choose, insist on his leading again.

4. When a hazard has been lost in any of the **CORNER** pockets, the leader is obliged; IF his adversary require it, to lead from the end of the table where the hazard was lost; but if the hazard were lost in either of the **MIDDLE** pockets, it is at the leader's option to play from either end of the table he pleases.

5. If the striker do not hit his adversary's ball, he loses one point; and if, by the same stroke, his own ball should go into a pocket, over the table, or lodge on a cushion, he loses three points; viz., one for missing his adversary's ball, and two for holing his own.

6. If the striker holes his **ADVERSARY'S** ball, or force it over the table, or on a cushion, he wins two points.

7. If the striker hole his **OWN** ball, or force it over the table, or on a cushion, he loses two points.

8. If the striker hole **BOTH** balls, or force the m over the table, he loses two points.

9. If the striker touch or move his **OWN** ball, not intending to make a stroke, it is deemed an accident, and he must, if his adversary require it, put back the ball in the place where it stood, and play over again.

10. He who does not play as far as his adversary's ball, loses one; or his adversary may oblige him to pass the ball, more especially in giving a miss; or he can, if he choose, make him replace the ball, and play until he has passed it.

The Red Winning Carambole Game.—This game is eighteen in number.

1. In commencing, string for the stroke and choice of the balls, the same as Rules 9 and 10, General Directions.

2. A red ball is to be placed on a spot made for that purpose in the centre, between the stringing dots at the upper end of the table.

3. After the first striker has played, his adversary is to follow, and so on alternately throughout the game.

4. If the striker miss both the balls, he loses one; and if he pocket his own ball by the same stroke, he loses three points.

5. If the striker hit the RED ball and his adversary's with his own ball, he wins two points; this is called a canon.

6. If the striker hole his adversary's ball, he wins two points; if he hole the red, he wins three.

7. If the striker hole the red and his adversary's ball by the same stroke, he wins five : two for the white and three for the red ball.

8. If the striker make a canon, and hole his adversary's ball and the red ball, by the same stroke, he wins seven points.

N.B. Always count two for the canon, two for holing the white, and three for the red ball.

9. Forcing any one or all the balls over the table does not reckon any point.

10. If the striker hole his own ball, by a foul or fair stroke, he loses either two or three points, according to which ball he struck first. Three for the red, and two for the white.

11. If the striker make a canon or a winning hazard, and force any of the balls over the table, he wins nothing by the stroke.

12. After the red ball has been holed, or forced over the table, the striker of it is bound to see it placed on the proper spot before he strikes again; otherwise he can win no points while the ball is out of its place, and the stroke is deemed foul.

13. If, after the red ball has been holed, or forced over the table, either of the white balls should lie upon, or be so near the spot, that the red cannot be placed in its proper situation without their touching each other, the red ball must then be placed on the spot in the centre of the table.

N.B. This and the foregoing rule are also applicable to the WINNING and LOSING GAME.

14. If, after the striker has made a canon, or holed his adversary's or the red ball, he should touch either of the balls which remain on the table, with hand, stick, or otherwise, he cannot score the points he made by the stroke, as it is deemed foul.

15. If the striker play with the wrong ball, or miss

both the balls, he loses one point; and if the ball should go into a pocket by the same stroke, he loses three points.

The Winning and Losing Carambole Game.

—This game is twenty-four in number. (In some public rooms, fifty, and sometimes a hundred.)

1. This game commences by stringing for the lead and choice of the balls, as in Rules 9 and 10, General Directions,

N.B. It is imagined by some persons, that the receiver of points (if any be given) is bound to lead off; but this is wrong, for the points given are understood to equalize the game. Why, therefore, should one party give away any supposed advantage he may possess over the other?

2. The red ball must be placed on the spot nearest the cushion at the top of the table, and replaced there when it is holed, or forced over the edge of the table, or when the balls are broken.

3. If the striker make any points, he may continue his game until he ceases to make points.

4. If the striker force his own or either of the other balls over the table, after having made a canon or hazard, he gains nothing by the stroke, and his adversary may play on without breaking the balls.

5. If the striker hole the WHITE ball (called a WHITE WINNING HAZARD), or if he hole his OWN ball from the WHITE ball (called a WHITE LOSING HAZARD) he gains two points; if he do both, he gains four points.

6. If the striker make a canon by striking the WHITE BALL FIRST, and hole his OWN ball by the same stroke, he wins four points; two for the canon and two for the white losing hazard.

7. If the striker play at the WHITE BALL FIRST, and should make a canon, and at the same time hole his OWN and his adversary's ball, he wins six; two for the canon and two for each white hazard.

8. If the striker play at the WHITE BALL, make a canon and pocket the red and the white balls, he gains seven points.

9. If the striker make a canon by striking the **WHITE BALL FIRST**, and should hole all the balls, he gains nine points.

10. If the striker canon by striking the **RED BALL FIRST**, and at the same time hole his own and the red, he wins eight points; two for the canon, three for the red losing, and three for the red winning hazard.

11. If the striker play at the **RED BALL FIRST**, and pocket his own and the white ball without a canon, he gains five points.

12. If the striker make a canon, by striking the **RED BALL FIRST**, and by the same stroke should hole his own and both the other balls, he wins ten points; being the greatest number that can be gained by one stroke.

13. If the striker play at the **RED BALL FIRST**, and pocket all the balls without making a canon, he gains eight points.

14. If the striker play at the **RED BALL FIRST**, and pocket it and his own ball, he gains six points; three for the red ball and three for the red losing hazard.

15. If the striker make a canon by striking the **RED FIRST**, and by the same stroke pocket his own ball, he wins five points; two for the canon and three for the red losing hazard.

16. If the striker miss the ball he intended to play at, he loses one point; and if by the same stroke his own ball runs into a pocket, he loses three points: viz., his adversary gains so many points. This is called a **COUP**.

17. If the striker play with the **WRONG BALL**, and his adversary do not discover it, he may reckon all the points gained by the stroke, and the marker must score them.

The American Game.—This game is played with four balls: two white, one red, and one pink.

At the commencement of the game, the red is placed on the spot, in the centre of the upper half of the table, and the pink in a similiar position at the lower baulk end, and is considered in the baulk;

consequently, cannot be played at when the striker's ball is in hand.

The baulk extends as far as the line of the pink, and can be played from any part within that line.

1. String for the lead; the winner having choice of the lead and balls.

2. The party leading *must play* a miss (which does not count) anywhere behind the red, or failing to leave it behind, must play it again; *but if it be in the least past the line of the red, it must remain there.* The miss does not count to either player.

3. The opponent *must then either play at the white ball or give a miss* (which counts one point against him). For should he strike either the red or pink it must be replaced, and his adversary scores a miss and goes on playing.

4. The game consists of canons and winning hazards; is generally played one hundred up, and is scored in the following manner:—

CANONS.—Two, if made with the white and either the red or pink; three, off both red and pink; and five, off all.

WINNING HAZARDS.—Two, for holing the white; three, for either the red or pink; six, for both red and pink; and eight, for holing all.

Thirteen can be made by one stroke.

5. Losing hazards count against the party making them, either two or three, besides the loss of whatever may have been scored by the stroke.

6. A losing hazard scores two to the opponent if the white ball be struck *by the striker's ball*, and three if the red or pink only.

7. If the striker force his own ball off the table, the penalty is the same as for a losing hazard; but no point is gained or lost by forcing either of the other balls off.

8. When the striker forces his opponent's ball off the table, it remains in hand; but if either the red or pink, it must be placed on the spot as at the commencement.

9. If, when a red or pink ball is holed or forced off the table, its proper spot be occupied by another ball,

it must remain in hand until there be room, and then spotted when the balls have done rolling.

10. No score can be made if the stroke be foul.

11. The stroke is foul if the striker move his own or another ball in the act of striking, or while the balls are rolling. But if in taking aim he accidentally touch or move a ball, it may be replaced, and the stroke will then be fair.

12. No score can be made when the striker's ball touches another.

13. The balls are never broken after a foul stroke, as in the English three-ball game, but must remain as they have run ; the adversary having the advantage of whatever may be left.

14. Should the striker play with the wrong ball, he cannot score, and his opponent has the option of playing with either ball.

15. Should the striker force his ball off the table, or run it off into a pocket without touching another, his adversary scores three points.

Rules for Pool.—1. When coloured balls are used, the players must play progressively, as the colours are placed on the pool marking board, the top colour being No. 1.

2. Each player has three lives at starting. No. 1 places his ball on the winning and losing spot ; No. 2 plays at No. 1 ; No. 3 at No. 2, and so on ; each person playing at the last ball, unless it should be in hand ; then the player plays at the nearest ball.

3. If a striker should lose a life in any way, the next player plays at the nearest ball to his own ; but if his (the player's) ball be in hand, he plays at the nearest ball to the centre of the baulk line, whether in or out of baulk.

4. Should a doubt arise respecting the distance of balls, it must (if at the commencement of the game, or if the player's ball be in hand) be measured from the centre spot in the circle ; but if the striker's ball be not in hand, the measurement must be made from his ball to the others, and in both cases it must be decided by the marker, or by the majority of the com-

pany; but should the distances be equal, then the parties must draw lots.

5. The baulk is no protection at this pool under any circumstances.

6. The player may lose a life by any one of the following means: by pocketing his own ball, by running a coup, by missing the ball, by forcing his ball off the table, by playing with the wrong ball, by playing at the wrong ball, or by playing out of his turn.

N.B.—A life is lost by a ball's being pocketed, or forced off the table by the adversary.

7. Should the striker pocket the ball he plays at, and by the same stroke pocket his own, or force it over the table, *he* loses the life, and not the person whose ball he pocketed.

8. Should the player strike the wrong ball, he pays the same forfeit to the person whose ball he should have played at, as he would have done if he had pocketed it.

9. If the striker miss the ball he ought to play at, and strike another ball and pocket it, *he* loses a life, and not the person whose ball he pocketed; in which case, the striker's ball must be taken off the table, and both balls should remain in hand until it be their turn to play.

10. If, when the striker is in hand, he plays with any ball on the table, instead of playing his own ball from the baulk, he loses a life, and the owner of the ball so struck may, if he please, require the marker to replace it on the spot which it originally occupied.

11. If the striker, whilst taking his aim, inquire which is the ball he ought to play at, and should be misinformed by any one of the company or by the marker, he does not lose a life; the ball must, in this case, be replaced, and the stroke played again.

12. If information is required by the player as to which is his ball, or when it is his turn to play, he has a right to an answer from the marker, or from the players.

13. When a ball or balls touch the striker's ball, or are in a line between it and the ball he has to play at,

so that it will prevent him hitting any part of the object ball he pleases, they must be taken up until the stroke is played, and after the balls have ceased running they must be replaced.

14. If a ball or balls are in the way of a striker's cue, so that he cannot play at his ball, he can have them taken up.

15. When a striker takes a life, he may continue to play as long as he can take a hazard, or until the balls are all off the table, in which latter case he plays from the baulk, or places his ball on the spot as at the commencement.

16. The first person who loses his three lives is entitled to purchase, or, as it is called, to star (that being the mark placed against his lives on the board to denote that he *has* purchased) by paying into the pool the same sum as the commencement, for which he receives lives equal in number to the lowest number of lives on the board.

17. If the first person out refuses to star, the second person may do it, but if the second refuse, the third may do it, and so on, until only two persons are left in the pool, in which case the privilege of starrng ceases.

18. Only one star is allowed in a pool.

19. If the striker should move another ball whilst in the act of striking his own ball, the stroke is considered foul; and if by the same stroke he pocket a ball, or force it off the table, the owner of that ball does not lose a life, and the ball must be placed on its original spot; but if by that stroke he should pocket his own ball, or force it off the table, he loses a life.

20. If the striker's ball touch the one he has to play at, he is then at liberty either to play at it, or at any other ball on the table; and it is not to be considered a foul stroke. In this case, however, the striker is liable to lose a life, by going into a pocket or over the table.

21. If, after making a hazard, the striker should take up his ball, or stop it before it has done running, he cannot claim the life, or the hazard, from the person

whose ball was pocketed ; it being possible that his own ball might have gone into a pocket, if he had not stopped it.

22. If, before a star, two or more balls are pocketed by the same stroke, including the ball played at, each having one life, the owner of the ball first struck has the option of starring ; but should he refuse, and more than one remain, the persons to whom they belong must draw lots for the star.

23. Should the striker's ball stop on the spot of a ball removed, the ball which has been removed must remain in hand until the spot is unoccupied, and then be replaced.

24. If the striker should have his next player's ball removed, and stop on the spot it occupied, the next player must give a miss from the baulk to any part of the table he thinks proper, for which miss he does not lose a life.

25. If the striker has a ball removed, and any other than the next player's ball should stop on the spot it occupied, the ball removed must remain in hand till the one on its place be played, unless it should happen to be the turn of the one removed to play before the one on its place, in which case that ball must give place to the one originally taken up ; after which it may be replaced.

26. If the corner of the cushion should prevent the striker from playing in a direct line, he can have any ball removed for the purpose of playing at a cushion first.

27. The two last players cannot star or purchase ; but they may divide, if they are left with an equal number of lives each ; the striker, however, is entitled to his stroke before the division.

28. All disputes to be decided by a majority of the players.

29. The charge for the play to be taken out of the pool before it is delivered up to the winner.

Rules of the Nearest Ball Pool. — In this pool the players always play at the nearest ball out of the baulk ; for in this pool, the baulk is a protection.

1. If all the balls be in the baulk, and the striker's ball in hand, he must lead to the top cushion, or place the ball on the winning and losing spot.

2. If the striker's ball be within the baulk line, and he has to play at a ball out of the baulk, he is allowed to have any ball taken up that may chance to lie in his way.

3. If all the balls be within the baulk, and the striker's ball not in hand, he plays at the nearest ball.

All the rules of the other pool are to be observed at this.

Pyramids.—1. This game may be played with any number of balls, but it is generally played with sixteen: viz., fifteen red and one white.

2. At the commencement, the coloured balls are to be placed on the table in the form of a triangle, the first ball to stand on the winning spot, which will form the point of the triangle nearest to the centre of the table.

3. If only two persons play, the players to string for the choice of lead—the leader to place his ball (the white) within the semicircle at the baulk, and to play at the coloured balls.

4. If more than two persons play, and the number is odd, each must play alternately; the rotation to be decided by stringing, or by drawing numbers out of a bag, which should be kept by the marker for that purpose.

5. If the number of players is even, they may form sides, when the partners may play alternately; or go out upon a hazard, miss, &c., being made, as may be previously agreed upon.

6. The next player plays with the white ball from the spot on which it was left by his opponent, except it should be off the table, in which case he plays from the baulk, as at the commencement.

7. None but winning hazards can be made, and the same rules are generally to be observed as at common pool.

8. The player who pockets the greatest number of balls wins the game.

9. If the player give a miss, pocket the white ball, or force it over the table, he loses one ; that is to say, he must place one of the coloured balls, which he has pocketed, on the winning spot, if unoccupied ; if not, it must be placed in a direct line behind it.

10. If the striker hole his own ball, or force it over the table, and at the same time pocket one or more of the coloured balls, or force *them* over the table, or move any ball in taking aim or striking, he loses all he might otherwise have gained by the stroke ; the coloured balls so removed must be replaced on the table, together with one of the striker's balls, as a penalty.

11. Should the striker losing a ball not have taken one, the first he holes must be placed on the table, as in Rule 9. Should he not take one during the game, he must pay for each ball so forfeited as much as he is playing for per ball.

12. If the white ball touch a coloured one, the player may score all the coloured balls he pockets ; he cannot give a miss.

13. If the striker force one or more of the coloured balls over the table, he scores one for each, the same as if he had pocketed them.

14. If the game is played with an even number of balls, the last hazard counts but one ; if with an odd number, it counts two.

15. When all the coloured balls but one are pocketed, the player who made the last hazard continues to play with the white ball, and his opponent with the red, alternately, as at single pool.

16. At the end of the game, the player who has pocketed the greatest number of balls is entitled to receive from each of the others the difference between their number and his, a certain sum per ball having been agreed upon at the commencement.

17. When only two balls are on the table, and two persons playing, should the striker hole the ball he is playing with, or make a miss, the game is finished ; if there are more than two players, and they are not partners, the striker places a ball on the spot, as in Rule 9.

Pyramid Pool.—1. This game is played with fifteen balls ; viz., fourteen red and one white.

2. At the commencement the balls are placed on the table in the shape of a triangle, the first ball to stand on the winning spot, as in Rule 2 Pyramid Game. The middle ball in the last row (which must always be the white ball) must be taken out, and played with from the baulk.

3. No. 1 plays from the baulk ; if he makes a winning hazard, he continues to play on till he has done scoring ; but if he pocket his own ball, or force it off the table, and by the same stroke pocket any or either of the other balls, the ball or balls so pocketed are placed on the table, on the winning spot, or, if occupied, as near to it as possible, in a line with the centre of the table ; and the first ball he takes during the game is forfeited and placed also on the winning spot. No. 2 then plays on.

4. A player loses a ball by pocketing the ball he plays with, by forcing it over the table, by missing all the balls, by playing with the wrong ball or out of his turn ; in either case he pays one ball to the person who played before him, one is taken from his score, and the next player proceeds.

5. When only two balls are left on the table, the game becomes single pool, and he who takes the last ball wins the pool.

Rules 3, 4, 11, 12, 13, and 14 in the pyramid game are to be observed also at pyramid pool.

CHAPTER XVI.

LA BAGATELLE, ETC.

DURING the time I was writing my papers on billiards in the *Field*, I was several times requested to say something about bagatelle. Now the truth is, that I have not played at the game since I was a boy; for bagatelle is to billiards what draughts is to chess, and he who plays at the superior game seldom practises much at the other. However, it is as well, perhaps, just to devote a page or two to the various bagatelle games, if it be only for the benefit of the twenty correspondents who have already addressed me on the subject.

Of course all my readers know that bagatelle is played on an oblong board, in which are nine cups or holes, and that it is the object of the players to place the balls in these cups, which are numbered from one to nine. The several games played on the bagatelle board are—*La Bagatelle* (usually called the English game), *Bagatelle à la Français* (known generally as the French game), *Sans Egal*, *Mississippi*, and *Trou Madame*. Besides these there are the *Canon* and the *Irish games*. Let us take them in the order here set down.

La Bagatelle.—This game is played by any number of players from two upwards, with nine balls, two of which are usually coloured and count double.

The red ball is placed on the spot, and the player strikes at it with the other coloured ball, endeavouring to hole it and his own ball by the same stroke. He then plays with the other balls successively until the whole nine have been sent up the table.

Any number of rounds may be played as agreed on at the commencement of the game, and he who obtains the greatest score wins the game.

If the ball struck at rebounds from the cushion and passes the baulk line, it is taken up and is con-

sidered lost for that round. Sometimes two lines are drawn across the table, one to determine the baulk and the other the lost balls.

This is an extremely easy game to play, and I have seen some persons so extremely dexterous as to be able to fill all the holes, with the coloured balls in the eight and seven, in a single round. The coloured balls counting severally sixteen and fourteen, it is possible to obtain sixty in a single go; or if the red ball were placed in the centre hole (the nine) and the black in the eight hole, you may even score as many as sixty-two. But such score is very unusual; a hundred in three goes being considered good play. The stroke for bagatelle must be much more easy and gentle than that for billiards; but what I have said with regard to side will apply equally to both games. The score is sometimes marked on the board itself, by means of pegs and holes along the edges.

The French Game.—The game is usually a hundred up, and may be played by two or more players: two or four is the usual number. The score is taken, as in *La Bagatelle*, from the figures marked within the cups.

The red ball is placed on the spot, and he who has the break strikes at it with the other coloured ball. If he succeeds in holing a ball at the start, he goes on till he fails; his adversary then plays, and so on alternately, till the number determined on is obtained. He who first gets that number wins the game.

While either of the coloured balls remains out of a hole it must be played at, and he who fails to strike it forfeits five to his adversary,

Missing a white ball counts one to the opposite party.

Knocking a ball off the table is usually a forfeit of five, though in some rooms no penalty is enforced.

If a ball lies over a hole, and does not fall immediately into it, the adversary may say "I challenge that ball;" when if it drops into the cup (from the vibration of the room or table, &c.) it must be replaced. This rule also applies to *La Bagatelle*.

Sans Egal.—This game is not often played, though it is very amusing. It is a good game for two players.

Each player chooses four balls; and the red ball is placed on the spot.

The player who has the lead strikes at the red, and if he hole it, adds the number it makes to his score, as well as any losing hazard he may make.

The two players then take alternate strokes, and he who makes the greatest number of points in one round wins the game.

So long as the red ball is in play it must be struck at, under a forfeit of five points.

To hole his adversary's ball counts against the striker.

Mississippi.—This game is played by means of a bridge placed across the board, and a couple of cushions against the side. Each player strikes his ball against one of the cushions, so as to make it rebound or canon on to the bridge, each arch of which bears a particular number. When the ball passes through the bridge, the player reckons the number of the arch to his score; and he who obtains the highest number in two or more rounds wins the game.

Trou Madame is played in exactly the same way as Mississippi, except that the balls are played direct at the bridge from the baulk, without the small cushions.

The Canon Game consists entirely of canons, and may be played any number up. It is played with three balls. There is not much art in making canons on a bagatelle board. I have lately made a hundred and seventy consecutive canons, just by way of experiment. I was tired of the exercise, or I think I could (nature permitting) have gone on until now!

The Irish Game consists of canons and winning hazards only. It is played with three balls, the canon counting two, and the hazard as many as is marked in the cup. If the player's own ball falls into a hole it counts to his adversary.

There are two or three other games on the bagatelle

board, but they are too simple to need explanation. There is also a game called Cockamaroo or Russian bagatelle, which is played on a board stuck full of pins with half a dozen arches, and a bell to ring when the ball strikes it. It is a pretty game enough for children; but, like the race game, it is sometimes made the vehicle for gambling among children of a larger growth. Bagatelle boards properly fitted up for all these games, and made to fold, so as to serve as tables when not in play, are made by Messrs. Thurston and Co., Catherine-street, Strand; Mr. Mechi, Leaden-hall-street; and most billiard-table makers. They are very useful in private houses, where the rooms are too small for a billiard table. The prices of bagatelle boards vary from seven or eight guineas upwards.

I have lately seen some bagatelle boards in Manchester and Liverpool, which are made with two pockets, in addition to the nine holes. On such tables the canon game is that usually played, an improvement, I think, on the old game.

I now, dear reader, bid you Farewell. If you are at any time in the neighbourhood of the Megatherium Club, send up your card by Jeames, and I shall be happy to come down and see you, and perhaps also crack a bottle with you, or smoke a cigar over a little pyramid on our own table—polished slate bed, double-milled superfine broad cloth covering, extra vulcanized India-rubber cushions, and new two-inch balls, all white except the striking ball, which is the exact colour of my friend the colonel's face and coat, a delightful crimson!



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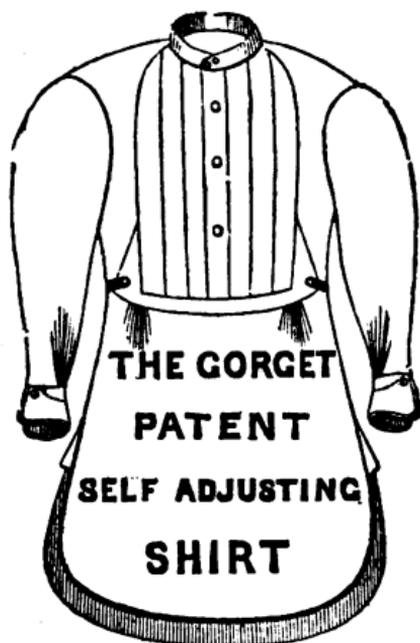
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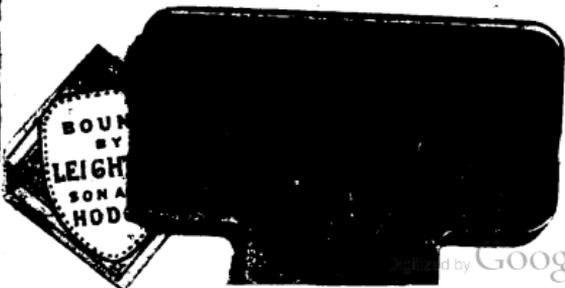
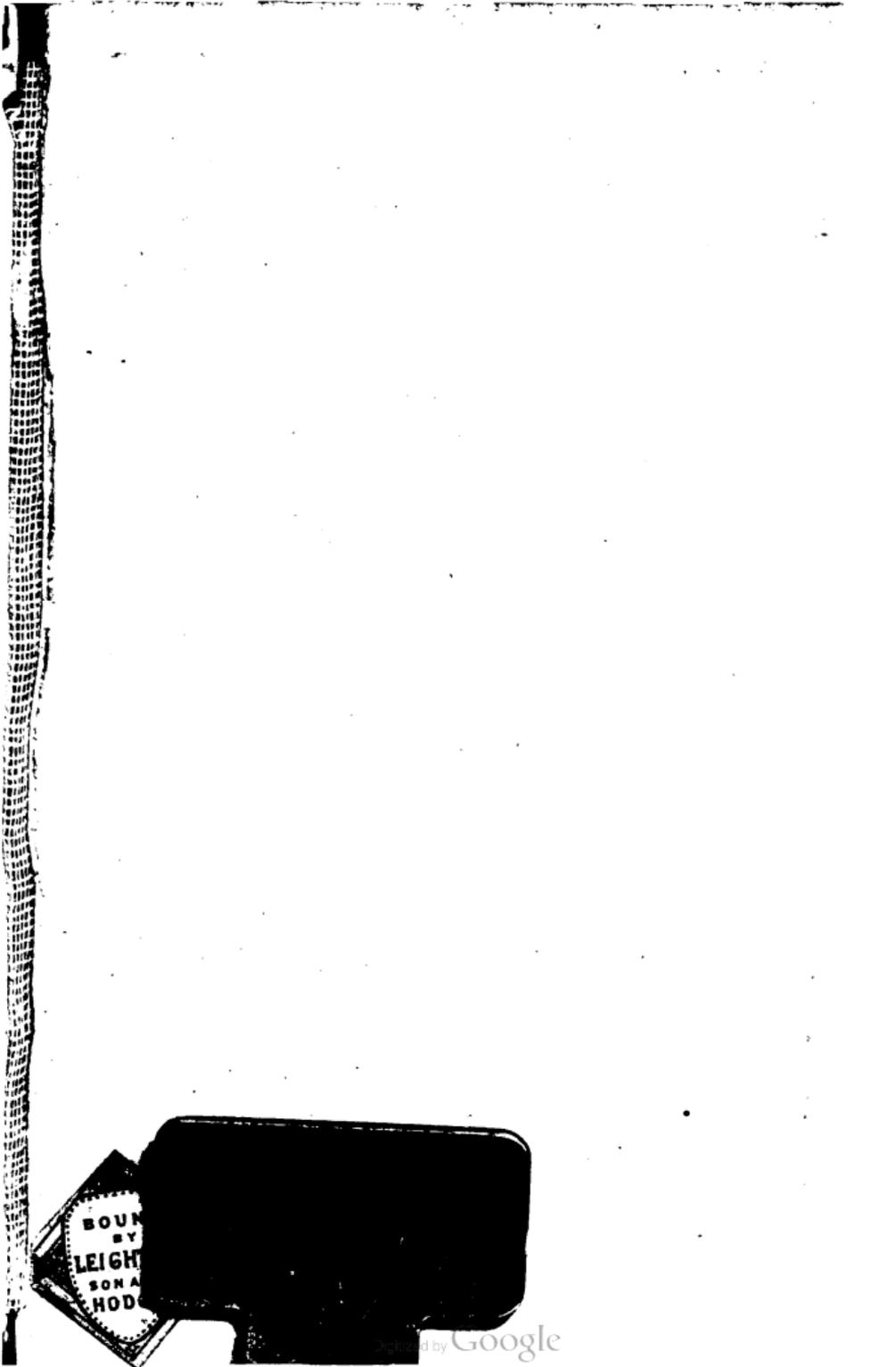
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