

PASSIRG



DODGING

DRIBBLING

GIRLS AT HOCKEY.



BULLYING THE BALL.



A FREE HIT.



HAVING become accustomed to the pleasures of lawn-tennis in summer, the girls of England felt the need of a good game for the winter months—a game which would grant them exercise and excitement, and yet not be beyond the powers of their sex. Hence the present formation of ladies' hockey clubs, which play at Wimbledon, Walton, Hampstead, and elsewhere, and which are daily becoming more numerous and more widely patronised. The game of hockey has never had the publicity it deserves: the books on sports and pastimes usually pass it over in silence, and the encyclopædia give it no mention. This may partly

arise from the simplicity of the game, which makes any lengthy treatise on the subject unnecessary: anyway, it was not till 1886 that a central association was formed, and fixed rules printed. Hockey bears a strong resemblance to Association football, the sole aim of the game being to get the ball between the goal post of your adversaries. There should be eleven players on each side—seven forwards and four backs; the forwards are divided into three in the centre and two to each side, those at the sides being called the left and right wings. The backs are divided into two half-backs, one three-quarter, and a goal-keeper. The centres have the best of the game, and should be chosen for their superior strength and skill: on their hits will the goals usually depend. The duty of the wings is to keep the ball to the centre of the ground; the duty of the half-backs to return the ball to the centre when it has got passed them. The three-quarter should be ready to stop a ball that passes the half-backs, and the goal-keeper is the last hope of the team when the ball has got beyond the rest. The poor goal-keeper usually has a very cold and very tiresome post; but one of the advantages of hockey is that it calls for unselfish play and combination. The half-back must learn to pass the ball, the wings must remember to feed the centre, though doubtless the honour of scoring a goal is hard to resist at times. The result of unselfish play is constantly seen on the field, when often the weaker team wins simply because they play well into one another's hands.

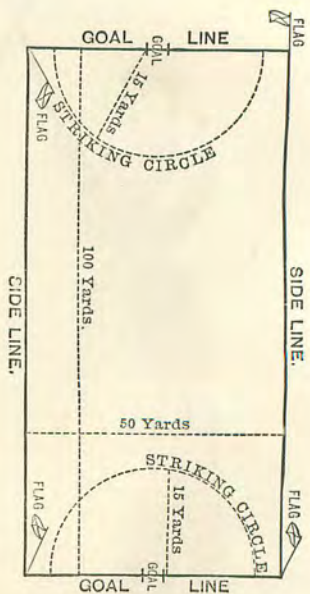
In ladies' matches a tennis ball, or light cork ball, is generally used. Some girls play with a walking-stick, but this is really more dangerous than the proper hockey club, which only costs 5s. The dangers of the game are almost *nil* if only women would keep the rules, which forbid the stick to be raised higher than the shoulder, and forbid the player to play off-side. Another temptation to be resisted by women is to make a graceful courtesy when the ball is approaching, and hide it in the folds of the dress. This manoeuvre always arouses the wrath of the sterner sex: so does the habit of screaming, in which some girls indulge. An article in the *Daily Graphic* lately made great fun of a ladies' hockey match; but though a few lady players make themselves ridiculous, the majority play thoroughly and well, and get much enjoyment out of this pastime. There is a small formality in commencing the game, known as "bullying the ball"; the two strikers-off stand opposite one another, the ball being between them; they then tap the ground and cross their sticks three times, and then both hit at the ball. It is well that the players on each side should wear some distinctive mark; for instance, one side could wear red Tam-o'-Shanters and the other blue: this saves confusion if the players are not well known to one another. Otherwise, the costume for the game merely requires to be a sensible one which will not impede movement, strong gloves and boots being a certain protection, though the player of hockey must make up her mind to an occasional blow on ankles or shins. Hockey should be played on a grass field, but it can be played on asphalt or on a broad gravel drive. Nor is it necessary always to have eleven players to each side; good practice and great fun can be got out of an impromptu match with perhaps only nine in a team, and some of these boys. It is always well to have a captain on

each side, who will keep the other players up to their work, and call to them to pass if their play is becoming selfish and endangering the chance of a goal. A good captain also will place her team with judgment, choosing those who are quick and small as



HOCKEY CLUB.

half-backs, and placing any young lady who is too languid for much running as goal-keeper. We are quite sure that hockey will grow in favour as a winter game for women as it becomes more widely known; it affords healthy exercise and plenty of fun and excitement. There is also a certain amount of



courage, endurance, and good temper to be acquired in any game which necessitates combination amongst the players; and these qualities help towards a healthy mind, even as the vigorous exercise helps towards a healthy body.