

LAWN TENNIS.



GIRLHOOD.

By SYDNEY GREY.

A gracious time!  
When budding thought and every virtue should  
Give promise of a fair and fruitful prime  
In riper womanhood.

A royal dower!  
(Engend'ring love and sweet home influence)  
Whose best and greatest treasure is the flower  
Of spotless innocence.

A fountain bright!  
Or laughing stream, unsullied at the source,  
And meant to scatter comfort and delight  
Throughout its later course.

A God-sent gift!  
O take it not unheeded—rather choose  
Each day, dear maid, thy simple prayer to lift,  
Lest thou the boon misuse.



HOW I LEARNED TO PLAY LAWN TENNIS.

I.



name conjures up a host of delightful visions. Grounds of asphalt or of concrete, over which the lithesome figures, clad in dainty costumes, gaily glide to the accompaniment of ringing laughter and merry jest; country houses with charming gardens, and the smooth green battle plain, where carefully marked courts and magic net, and balls and rackets lying temptingly near, invite us to the fray. What can be more pleasant, after strolling among beds of particoloured blossoms, the pride of the gardener's heart, than to come suddenly on such a nook—too wide-spreading, indeed, to deserve that cosy name, were it not for the trees which surround and shelter it!

There is a shady arbour yonder with yellow roses clambering round the entrance and filling it with fragrance; there is a bench under the great walnut tree, cool on the warmest day; and lounging chairs are dotted temptingly about. But no inglorious repose must be ours in these sacred precincts if we be fleet of foot and keen of eye. Not until we have scored a hard won victory, or a defeat scarcely less honourable, may we sink with a sigh of satis-

faction on the rustic seat to fight our battles o'er again in fancy, or to solace ourselves with the strawberries which Tommy and his little sister have gathered for our refreshment. Caroline turns her straw hat into a fan, and pushes the wavy hair back from her forehead. She laughingly confesses herself tired out, for her antagonist has a strong arm, and kept her at the utmost verge of the court until fairly beaten. But what fun—there surely was never a game like it! And how she pities the unhappy folks who had got through their girlhood before the era of lawn tennis.

"How did you manage to amuse yourselves?" she inquires saucily of Tommy's mamma and her own elder sister.

And that young matron answers merrily, "Oh! don't waste your pity upon us; we found quite as much pleasure in rolling our balls on the grass as you do in sending them into the air."

"Croquet!" exclaims Caroline, pityingly. "Defend me from such a stupid, slow way of passing the time! How you endured it I cannot conceive, Mary."

"She endured it pretty well on the whole," says Mary's husband; "especially when I was by to pilot her ball through the hoops."

Mary does not deny the soft impeachment. She smiles as there rises before her mental vision the croquet ground and its happy group of players—the girls in crinoline and looped-up skirts, and dainty balmoral boots and pork pie hats; the men in garments of that peculiar cut known as "peg-top." She hears the familiar tap of the wooden balls and the ringing of the little bell in the centre. How cleverly George always helped her along just there, and how viciously he sent her opponents flying to right and left, keeping his own ball ever in friendly neighbourhood with hers! "Stupid—it was anything but that," she thinks, coming back to the present to watch her lively sister, racket in hand, skimming over the lawn, while George, bearded and bronzed now, tries her skill to the utmost with his vigorous play.

It cannot be denied, however, that apart

from fashion and the tendency to consider novelty and superiority synonymous terms, lawn tennis has many advantages over its immediate predecessor. While calling into equal exercise the eye and the judgment, it demands an amount of muscular exertion which cannot fail to be of benefit, not only to those brisk young damsels who require some such safety valve for their superabundant energy, but also to the more indolently inclined, who find here the needed inducement to rouse them to activity.

Croquet—to quote our too slang-loving brothers—was a "spoony" game. An indifferent player could be assisted by her partner to their mutual satisfaction, and to the hindrance of no one's enjoyment; doubtless it owed its long-standing popularity in a great measure to this fact. But sentiment is less admissible on the tennis ground, where it is essential that all the players take their due share of the game, and not only play but play well.

If this was true ten years ago when the innovation was regarded with but mild interest as an amusement likely to become fashionable at garden parties and suburban villas, it is doubly so to-day, when it is almost as much a national institution as cricket or football. Tennis matches have been frequent lately at Prince's, Stamford Bridge, and elsewhere; and advocates for the equality of the sexes must have felt special satisfaction in the thought that the game so dear to most youthful female hearts is now accepted sport of men. And the best of it is, that no one can stigmatise as unfeminine or unlady-like a pastime which never ceases, when played with moderation and dexterity, to be a graceful exercise; although calculated, in the hands of competent performers, to become no mean test of strength and endurance. I forget—such is the base ingratitude of human nature—who was its originator, but I read some little time since that his numerous admirers were bent on presenting him with a testimonial, and have regretted my cursory glance at the notice.



"Blessed," says Sancho Panza, "be the man who invented bed!" And I, with half the girls of England ready to swell the chorus, can exclaim as heartily, "Blessed be the man who invented lawn tennis!"

My first acquaintance with the art was made in Kent at the pleasant home of some friends. The front of their house looked on the quaint street of a country town, but at the back stretched a long sunny garden, with peaches and nectarines ripening on the walls, and luscious black cherries gleaming enticingly through their protecting network; with prolific strawberry plants edging the old-fashioned borders, where stocks and clove pinks, and great white lilies and modest mignonette flourished amazingly; with broad gravelled walks, spanned by light arches of trellis work, unseen in leafy June for the many clusters of roses that climbed over them, and hung from them, and hid them altogether in peculiar Kentish fashion, as I used to fancy. At the bottom of the garden a flight of steps led to a broad kind of terrace; on either side of this lay the shubbery, whence through the thickly-planted trees some lovely bits of landscape might be seen, and beyond it a large bed of glowing rhododendrons.

At the time of my visit the boys of the household had just conceived the idea of utilising this terrace by making it a tennis ground. I should mention that the "boys," as their mother called them—she was the daintiest and most fragile little lady you could imagine, in her pretty mob cap and lace ruffles—were four great, strapping fellows, close upon six feet high, every one.

"You see," said Robert, the second son, as we all strolled on the aforesaid terrace one evening, "it would really make a capital ground, and if no one has any objection to offer, we may as well get a set at once. Percy can easily order it when in town."

This was the eldest "boy," a medical student who went up to Guy's Hospital every day.

"Will you have space enough?" questioned the mother.

"Oh! enough and to spare. I took the measurement to-day. The length of the court must be seventy-eight feet, and its width for the single-handed game twenty-seven feet. But for the three and four-handed games thirty-six feet in width is required. Then the two posts which support the net should stand three feet outside the court on each side. Still we shall have plenty of room, and it will be quite an amusement for you and my father to come down and watch the game."

"How about the rhododendrons?" said my portly host, glancing rather ruefully towards his cherished shrubs. "I suppose your balls go out of court occasionally, eh? I shouldn't at all enjoy seeing you and the rest floundering in after them among my rhododendrons."

"And poor old Morris would be furious!" murmured mischievous Frank to me.

"We can guard against that," answered Robert, "by fixing some stout netting a pretty good height along that side."

The result of the discussion was the purchase of the implements necessary for the game; and a day or two afterwards old Morris was busily engaged in sweeping away the fine gravel from the terrace, the ground of which was very firm and level, preparatory to marking out the court, a process I watched with some interest.

At each end of the court, parallel with the net, and at a distance of 39 feet from it, were drawn the base lines, 27 feet in width. Two other lines, exactly similar to these, but only 21 feet from the net on either side, were also marked. They were the service lines. All the four were connected at their extremities by the side lines, and intersected in the middle by the half court line, which divided the space lengthways into two equal parts, called the

right and left courts. The ground was then ready for two players. To render it available for three or four, an extra line was added parallel with each side line, and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet from it, thus making the width of the court 36 feet instead of 27 feet. When the court is expressly marked out for the larger number of players, the two inner side lines only extend from the extremities of the service lines, and they are called the service side lines.

After this the net became the chief object of interest. Mr. Fanshaw had innocently offered some rather aged garden-netting, but the proposal elicited such an elaborate description of what was required, that he was glad to hide his diminished head and return the treasure to the old gardener, who packed it away again in his outhouse, and was a long time before he forgave the contempt with which it had been treated. It was good enough to be useful to him, and surely it was good enough for the young gentlemen to toss their balls over, since that was their new-fangled notion? Morris erred greatly. A tennis net, we were told, should be made of strong twine, tanned after netting. The meshes should be square, with a side of about an inch and a-half. The net should descend to and lie on the ground. It should be tied to the posts at intervals of about six inches; or, better still, an iron rod should be threaded through the end meshes and fixed to the post. And along the top of the net should run a thick cord, covered with grey calico.

"The weight of so long a net will make it drop in the middle," said Percy; and he was right. But Robert, the indefatigable, consulted a competent authority, and soon obviated that defect. A stout iron hook was driven into the ground midway between the two posts, and a string of the requisite length tied to the net cord, and looped into the hook. A strong indiarubber ring was then fixed to the net cord at the top of one of the posts, and a small winch near the top of the other post. The net cord being attached to the indiarubber ring at one end, and wound on to the winch at the other, the net was easily kept firm and straight.

Now ensued the era of flannel costumes, of buckskin or canvas shoes with rubber soles; of much talk concerning rackets with cork handles, rackets with cedar handles; plain grey balls, cloth-covered balls, understitched balls, and what not. Warned by previous experience, Mr. Fanshaw did not give utterance to the conviction I could see he cherished in his heart—that any ordinary indiarubber ball would answer the purpose. And probably he congratulated himself on his prudence when he discovered that no lawn tennis player worthy the name would use balls less than two and a-half inches or more than two and nine-sixteenths inches in diameter, and less than one and seven-eighth ounces, or more than two ounces in weight. To these nice calculations he listened with mute respect. It also appeared that the balls to be perfect should be covered with strong white cloth, cemented on to the rubber, and then sewn as real tennis balls are sewn. The mention of white cloth impelled me to remark that they would very soon be dirty; but I was informed they might be quickly cleaned by brushing with warm soap and water. They were then to be well rinsed in cold water, squeezed, and put to dry in a moderately warm place.

Well, the boys, in my private opinion, went tennis mad; and the mania was anything but an improvement. Robert, who had been so delighted when he found I could manage his little thoroughbred mare, and did not mind taking a fence or two, that he was constantly asking me to go for a ride, now sought "metal more attractive" on the terrace. Frank and Bertie were no sooner free, the one from his office, the other from his tutor, than they must

practise serving, or volleying, or some equally mysterious manœuvre. And even the studious Percy, formerly wont to amuse us in the evening with his microscope, or to stroll sedately with his mother and me, discoursing learnedly of things in general and hospital life in particular, was manifestly restless and unhappy till he had exchanged the sober garb of everyday life for a brilliantly striped jacket, in which he looked a cross between a jockey and an Indian prince.

My stay was short, and my friends were not well up in the rules, so, although I several times joined the players, I obtained but a vague notion of the game, and, indeed, with the rashness peculiar to ignorance, had already pronounced the sweeping condemnation that there was "nothing in it." As for the manner of scoring, it seemed "confusion worse confounded." I heard shouts of "Love-fifteen," "Thirty-love," "Advantage," and "Deuce"—Mrs. Fanshaw mildly reproved her youngest son the first time that caught her ear, by the bye—and despaired of ever understanding such a jargon. But Bertie, anxious, perhaps, to clear himself from all unjust imputations, was at great pains to enlighten us on this point, for which purpose he produced a well-thumbed yellow pamphlet, and read as follows:—

"On either player winning his first stroke, the score is called 'fifteen' for that player; on either player winning his second stroke, the score is called 'thirty' for that player; on either player winning his third stroke, the score is called 'forty' for that player; and the fourth stroke won by either player is scored game for that player, except as below:—

"If both players have won three strokes, the score is then called 'deuce,' and the next stroke won by either player is scored 'advantage' for that player. If the same player win the next stroke he wins the game; if he lose the next stroke the score is again called 'deuce'; and so on until either player win the two strokes immediately following the score of 'deuce,' when the game is scored for that player.

"The player who first wins six games wins a set, except as below:—

"If both players win five games the score is called 'games-all,' and the next game won by either player is scored 'advantage-game' for that player. If the same player win the next game he wins the set, if he lose the next game the score is again called 'games-all,' and so on until either player win the two games immediately following the score of 'games-all,' when he wins the set."

"When the players are equally matched, the contest at this stage might be lengthy," said Mrs. Fanshaw.

"Yes. Of course, they may agree not to play advantage sets, but to decide the set by one game after arriving at the score of games-all. The scoring is a very simple affair, and yet I am afraid I have not made it quite clear," with a glance at me.

"Not quite. Your rule says nothing about 'love,' and you are constantly calling, 'love-fifteen,' or 'fifteen-love.' What is 'love'?"

"It merely means that the player whose score is so called has not yet won a stroke. I believe that some make it a rule to call the server's score first; and we have done so. Consequently, when you hear 'fifteen-love,' you know the serving side is ahead; and 'love-fifteen' tells you the opposing party has the best of it."

"Then 'love' counts for nothing?"

"Precisely—in tennis," said Bertie, raising his honest, brown face, with a laugh.

"It is a senseless game!" was my petulant rejoinder.

"With all due deference to you, Miss Bessie, it is a sensible and healthy one," remarked the embryo doctor, who came up at



this juncture, arrayed in his many-hued toga. "It just gives the amount of physical exercise calculated to strengthen the muscles, or to shake off the depression arising from too sedentary habits. Any girl who can play daily for an hour or two without discomfort or fatigue may be sure that her lungs are in good order, and that she is cool in her head and sound on her feet. In short, lawn tennis is—"

"Jolly fun!" interposed Bertie. "Come along—here are the rackets—the evening will be gone in no time. Won't you come, Bessie? You would be first-rate at serving, if you would only practise."

But resisting all entreaties, I turned with my book to the shrubbery, mentally deciding that I should never care for the game.

Ah, me! time works wonders. That was five—six years ago. Cheery-faced Bertie dates his letters from China. Percy is married, and a hard-working country doctor. And I have seen the error of too hasty judgment, and am an enthusiast in the pursuit I once despised—as these papers bear witness.

My next acquaintance with lawn tennis was made at a fashionable seaside town, where I proposed to spend some months as parlour boarder with the lady at whose school I had been educated. The prospect was additionally pleasant, owing to the fact that several of my old schoolfellows were staying there just then, and among them two of my cousins; our former governess and present hostess being a charming woman, who invariably retained the friendship of her pupils after they had ceased to have any claim to that title.

My arrival was hailed with delight, and Una, the youngest cousin, invited herself to tea with me in my own room; and while I rested luxuriously after my journey in the deep, chintz-covered chair she had drawn forward, and watched through the shaded window the many white sails dancing on the blue sea, and the crowd of promenaders on the parade, she volunteered an account of their daily doings.

Una was an engaging little chatterbox, and life, according to her animated description, would be decidedly pleasant at Blencowe House.

"Early in the morning," said she, "we go down to the swimming bath, all except Grace and Minnie, who prefer the sea. Then two or three of us generally ride—you did not forget your habit? We have our horses from Poole."

"Screws, of course!" I ejaculated, with the conscious superiority of a country-bred girl, who has always possessed a pony of her own.

"No, indeed!" indignantly. "They are as good as private horses—almost. Poole takes us for lovely canterers over the downs; and he has a black cob which can trot fourteen miles an hour. What do you say to that?"

I judiciously reserved my opinion of the black cob and his merits, and recalled my companion's wandering thoughts to the subject in hand.

"Well, and then you come home to lunch; and what do you do in the afternoon?"

"We rest, or read, or work. But often there is a morning concert, or some such entertainment, to which Mrs. Hare kindly takes us. Is she not sweet, Bessie?"

"Very. And after dinner?"

"After dinner? Oh! there is the pier for you, if you care for the band. But more generally we play lawn tennis. Will you be too tired to begin to-night?"

"Yes," said I, stifling a yawn; "indeed I shall."

"But you like tennis?" inquired Una, anxiously. "You are a good player, of course?"

"Not I! I think it *strangely* overrated."

This confession seemed quite too much for my cousin. She sat regarding me in silence

with a comical look of pity for some moments; then said abruptly, as if determined to go to the root of the matter, "What do you know about it?"

Taken off my guard by this authoritative question, I could only answer feebly that I was aware the object of each player is to return the ball to his adversary before it touches the ground a second time, and that I understood the mode of scoring.

"Not much to boast of," said the small inquisitor, with supreme disdain, which was hard, seeing that I had not boasted. "And I dare say," she went on, remorselessly, "you could not call the score properly, after all."

My doubtful face confirming her in this opinion, she proceeded glibly to explain.

"Suppose you and I are playing, and you win the first stroke, the game is called 'fifteen-love.' If I win the next stroke it is 'fifteen-all;' but if you win it, 'thirty-love,' and so on after each stroke won. If we both win three strokes, the score is called 'deuce;' then at the next stroke it is called 'advantage' for the side that wins it, and then either 'game' or 'deuce,' according to the following stroke. When the first game is finished the score is called 'one-game-love,' and the strokes of the second game are called as before. At the conclusion of the second game the score would be called 'two-games-love,' or 'one-game-all,' according to the result, and so on until the winning stroke of the set is played, when the score is called 'game and set.' There, I am quite exhausted," said Una, handing her tiny blue cup to be replenished. "Did you know all that?"

"I hadn't it quite so pat," I rejoined, laughing. "I have played so little."

"Ah! And you are just like the rest of the world—ready to pronounce an opinion on what you don't understand. Now, Bessie, dearest, do put yourself in my hands, and let me teach you to play tennis. You will thank me for it some day; and really such ignorance as you display is quite too shocking!"

Looking at it in this light I began to feel slightly uncomfortable, and very much inclined to accept my cousin's offer. If the other girls shared her sentiments, I should evidently be regarded as a Goth, a barbarian, not exactly the character in which one would choose to reappear among old friends. However, I merely said, with what indifference I could muster, "Where do you play? Not in this small garden?"

"No, I wish we could, because it would be on grass. But, as the next best thing, we hire a court at the rink close by."

"You prefer grass, then?"

"It does not wear out one's shoes so much," said Una, with a disconsolate glance at her pretty little house slippers. It is a marvel to me that in the interest of poverty-stricken individuals like myself no one invents some foot gear with a special view to durability on asphalt, but I suppose that is a luxury reserved for future generations. Lottie Harding—the Hardings are the people next door, and great friends of Mrs. Hare—declares that she found herself coming through her last pair before she had worn them a week. But to be sure she and her brother are for ever at tennis. They play splendidly—indeed, nearly every one plays well whom we know at the court."

"Una," said I, now quite resolved to master this universal accomplishment as soon as might be, "don't you think you could give me a lesson when no one else is playing?"

"I think it may be managed," replied Una, graciously. "We will see to-morrow."

It was managed. I provided myself with a pair of shoes; and remembering my cousin's grievance, mentioned to the shopman that they were required for use upon asphalt. He recommended those with red rubber soles, which, he said, were intended for asphalt courts. Una advised me to invest in a pretty

apron with a pocket for the balls. "While far from wishing to encourage indolence," remarked that young philosopher, "I certainly hold with economy of labour; and you have no idea how many steps and how much needless fatigue will be saved by that good sized, handy pocket. There, my dear, you look quite the thing. Here is a racket. You see we keep the rackets in a press that they may not warp. Now we will go round to the court; there is most likely not a creature there at present, and I shall be able to tyrannise over you to my heart's content."

(To be continued.)

(Continued from page 9.)

good to the system. They are free from danger, too, because they are free from adulteration. Beware of broken teas, "bonus" teas, and tea-dust. A good tea looks clear, is crisp, and has a pleasant odour, but not scent. Scented teas should be avoided, and unless for medicinal purposes so should green tea.

Good tea when made should have a pleasant taste and aroma, with sufficient colour, and should not come all off in the first water.

Now I will suppose you have bought some good tea; where is it best to keep it? The answer is—in a tin canister with an air-tight lid. Why? Because one of the principles of tea, in which a deal of its virtue lies, is a volatile oil which gets dispelled by contact with the air.

And now about making tea. This is what nine people out of every ten fail in doing well. To make a good cup of tea, then, you want to begin with four things, viz., fire, water, a kettle, and a teapot. Just a word or two about each of these.

The fire should be a bright one, as free from smoke as possible. This stands to reason: we do not want to drink tea with the flavour either of burning wood, coal, or peat. By boiling the kettle over a hot range you avoid any chance of smoky tea. But everyone is not possessed of a range; therefore, I say, boil the kettle over a clear fire.

The water should be soft rather than hard; but no attempt should be made to counteract its hardness by adding soda to the tea in the teapot; soda in tea renders it sloppy, soapy, and unwholesome. The water should be very clean and good, and if possible it ought to be filtered. Filters nowadays are very cheap to buy, and they can be made at home more cheaply still.

The kettle should be always kept scrupulously clean both inside and out. It ought not to be furred inside, nor sooty nor smoky outside. I prefer a kettle that does not take long to boil, for the water with which good tea is to be made ought not to be stewed—it should come straight to the boiling point without delay.

The teapot may be china or silver, but perhaps the best tea can be made in the common old-fashioned brown earthenware glazed teapot. It is scarcely necessary to say that the teapot should be kept very clean, and never a particle of the old tea-leaves left in it when concocting a new cup. Well, then, we have a bright fire, a clean kettle filled with good pure fresh water hung over it, we place our dry teapot near the fire to get thoroughly hot by the time the water boils, and when the kettle sings cheerily, giving evidence it will soon be at the boiling point, we put the allowance of tea in, and warm that too.

Now the kettle boils, do not lose a moment—add the water at once to the tea. Yes, all you want for first cups; it is nonsensical putting in but a little, then letting it stew and adding more. Set the teapot in a warm place to draw for about seven minutes, no longer; then pour it out.



## HOW I LEARNED TO PLAY LAWN TENNIS.

## II.



HE tennis ground to which my guide conducted me was a large enclosure, capable of accommodating several sets of players. A raised walk on each side was sheltered by sturdy young limes at regular intervals, and provided with seats for any who

chose to be spectators rather than performers; and hardy euonymus and clinging ivy took off the bareness of the walls. The place was silent and deserted, save for one attendant of a reflective turn, whose meditations

our abrupt appearance scarcely put to flight.

"Nobody comes at this time; it is so warm," said Una. "But I don't mind risking my complexion for once—a practical proof of affection which it is to be hoped you will value. This is my favourite court. Now these lines—"

"Oh! never mind the lines. I know all about them," I exclaimed, rather ungratefully, and began to rattle off their respective names and the measurements, of which I had heard too much when in Kent. My hearer was evidently impressed.

"Really," said she, "you are better acquainted with that part of the business than I am myself. Perhaps you are wiser than I thought. Can you serve?"

Ignoring the doubtful compliment which preceded the question, I replied that I could.

"Very well. You shall be the server, and I the striker-out; and you can take which side of the court you like, as we are only practising. But the choice of sides and the right of serving during the first game are properly decided by toss. If the winner of the toss choose the right to serve, his adversary has the choice of sides, and *vice versa*. Where are you going? The first service must be delivered from the right court; and the server must stand with one foot outside the base-line of the court, and with the other foot within or upon the base-line. Now play! That's a fault"—as my ball fell short of my net—"and that's another"—as the next dropped into the court parallel with mine instead of the one diagonally opposite. "If the server serve two consecutive faults she loses a stroke; so, adopting it as a rule to call the server's score first, this makes love-fifteen. Change courts, please. What did you mean by saying you could serve? You will need a lot of training before I allow you to appear in public!"

This is a mild specimen of what I went through that day. The reflective attendant looked on with a grim delight, doubtless thinking I deserved a great deal more lecturing than I got for my awkwardness. Not that this first essay was a fair specimen of my later attempts, for I soon began to improve; and when I thoroughly understood that the ball served must drop within the service line, half court-line, and side line of the court diagonally opposite to that from which it was served, a more steady and careful aim enabled me to get on better.

Una then said the service was good, this being the technical term signifying that the ball has been served in accordance with the conditions. She, as striker-out, had to return

the service, that is, to play the ball back over the net after it had dropped and before it had touched the ground a second time.

"Don't send your balls so high," she commanded. "They are bound to go out of court."

"You might have volleyed the last," said I; for I knew volleying meant returning the ball before it touched the ground; and I was anxious to show our phlegmatic spectator that I was not absolutely ignorant of the game.

But Una merely remarked, "Not at all. You may volley a ball at any other time, but not when it has just been served. The server wins a stroke if the stroker-out volley the service; just as he does if the stroker-out fail to return the service or the ball in play; or if he return it so that it drops outside any of the external boundary lines. Are you ready?"

I recommenced serving, and managed to keep the ball going for several strokes.

"That was quite a long rest," said Una, delightedly. "Playing the ball backwards and forwards without a break is called a rest; and after a good service, and during the rest, the ball is said to be in play. But we waste time talking. Play!"

"One moment, dear. It does not matter then, after the service, where the ball drops so long as it is within the external boundary of the court, or on any of the external boundary lines?"

"Not a bit! It may drop either to the right or to the left of the central line, or in front of or beyond the service line. The divisions marked by those lines only affect the service, and have nothing to do with the subsequent returns; when a returned ball drops anywhere in the court the return is called good. But play, Bessie, if you love me! Ask as many questions as you like at home, but practise now, or I shall feel that we have broiled ourselves for nothing."

"I am really sorry to have brought you out in the sun—," I began meekly, but was immediately cut short.

"Nonsense! And it isn't the sun that makes me warm at this present moment; it is the outrageous manner in which you will hold your racket. And why do you let it follow the ball, as it were? Now this is the way to serve, and I intend the ball to drop as nearly in the centre of the left hand court as possible."

Holding the racket in one hand and the ball in the other, my cousin tossed the latter, and striking it while in the air with what seemed to be the lightest touch, sent it straight to the spot indicated.

"You have the knack of it," said I, admiringly.

"It is easy enough, but not if you grasp the racket handle with the thumb and first finger; you will want these as guides when the racket is moved. You should hold it lightly with the second, third, and fourth fingers, the free end of the handle being on the side of the wrist opposed to the palm. When you are about to strike, the shoulder should be towards the net, and the face towards the side of the court. Just so. Now, when about to strike, carry the racket upwards and backwards, and in the act of striking bring it downwards and forwards. You see, as the racket is moved, the free end of the handle falls under the wrist. The racket is held with an *open face* in order to keep the ball high enough to clear the net by about a foot; it is not safer to send it closer, or you will be likely to play it into the net."

I had determined to reserve several questions until the practical part of the lesson was over, but here my curiosity got the better of my resolve, and I inquired—

"What in the world is an open face?"

"It only means that the racket should be inclined a little out of the perpendicular, the smooth side upwards, because that is always used in the forehand stroke. The rough face of the racket is used when you want to play the ball back-handed, you know."

I did not know, and hastened to come back to the more rudimental part by striking the ball in the usual way.

"Try again," said Una, "and strike when the ball is about breast high; that you will find is best for the ordinary service, although of course it can be struck at any part of its descent; when high up, or when near the ground, as it may suit you."

Again I tried, and again Una critically regarded the performance. Handing me a third ball, she advised me to extend the arm more freely, slightly bending the elbow. I was, moreover, earnestly enjoined to keep the wrist straight, and to make the stroke from the shoulder, or the necessary power would be lacking to send the ball over the net.

"Where have you hidden yourselves all the morning?" asked Maud Brandon, at lunch. "We had a delightful time under the pier; it was so cool and refreshing to sit there and hear the green waterlap against the ironwork, and catch the echo of 'Sweethearts' from the band on the beach."

"Why, Maudie, you grow quite poetical," said Una, who had no idea of betraying our occupation. "But there were drawbacks, I perceive, notwithstanding your glowing description. Your dress looks rather limp, and the sea breeze has taken your hair out of curl."

"Two evils easily remedied," replied Maud, with a careless laugh. "And, Una, speaking of dress reminds me that I want you to paint a poppy in your best style in the front of my new tennis hat. Do, there's a darling!"

Una, dear little soul, did not require much pressing. She duly painted the poppy on the soft white hat; and while she was so engaged I took the opportunity to ask for information on a few points that had puzzled me in the morning.

The reaction from my previous indifference must have been rather trying for my self-constituted mentor, for I gave her no peace until I had thoroughly mastered the rules. But fortunately she was quite as eager to teach as I to learn—a state of things which is sure to lead to speedy progress.

"You say you do not understand faults," said she, delicately darkening a brightly-tinted petal. "Well, it is a fault if the server does not stand as I directed, with one foot outside the base line and the other within or upon the line; and it is a fault if the service drops in the net—that is, does not pass it, or if it drops out of court, or in the wrong court, or if it is delivered from the wrong court."

"Suppose the striker-out were to make a good return?"

"It would not count, since a fault may not be taken; and for this reason a player attempting to return a fault and failing loses nothing."

"The constant change of courts is confusing?"

"Oh, no. The server must deliver the first service from the right court, the next from the left court, and so on alternately during the game. The only exception is that after a fault the server is allowed a second trial from the same court from which he has served the fault, and not then if it is a fault because served from the wrong court. There is this advantage in serving, that you have a second ball to fall back upon; otherwise the chances seem pretty equally divided. I have already



mentioned the three occasions when the server wins a stroke; there are three others when the striker-out does the same, viz., when the server serves two consecutive faults, when he fails to return the ball in play, and when he returns it so that it drops outside any of the boundary lines. There are other rules which apply to either player, and which you will readily learn by watching our game this evening."

Maud wore her white hat, and arrayed in that, and a pretty pink frock tastefully trimmed with a darker shade of velveteen, looked as charming a player as ever handled a racket. I did not play, but sat with Mrs. Hare under the limes, looking on, and found it very good amusement, now that I understood something of the game. My little cousin, in a dark-blue jersey, which she affirmed was the most comfortable thing to play in, darted hither and thither like the sprite she was, and rarely missed her balls. I soon discovered the rules of which

she had spoken, and made a mental note of them for future use. A player lost a stroke if she touched or struck the ball more than once in returning it; or if the ball, after a good service or return, touched her or anything she wore or carried, except her racket. Once when the ball touched Maud in its drop, I thought the rule would not hold, for she happened to be beyond the external boundary line; but it did, and the stroke counted to her opponent, although the ball, of course, fell out of court. Lottie shortly afterwards wished to score a stroke on the ground that her ball, under similar circumstances, had touched Una; but the claim was not allowed, as it had only done so in the rebound, and not in the drop, and the moment it has dropped out of court a ball is out of play. One young lady, convicted of touching the net or some of its supports while the ball was in play, paid the penalty by losing a stroke. And presently arose mingled exclamations of triumph and dismay.

"Oh! Una, how could you? That was 'more haste and less speed' with a vengeance!" exclaimed Maud. "And it has actually given them the game."

"Don't speak to me! Don't come near me!" cried Una, running up to us, and dropping on the seat by my side, with a little gesture of despair, copied from Mrs. Hare's French maid. "I am mortified. I am *désolée*, as Adrienne says. No, do not attempt to comfort me, Mr. Harding—I am beyond your powers of consolation. To think that I should have thrown away our only chance!"

"What did you do?" I ventured to inquire. "I volleyed the ball before it had passed the net," replied Una, solemnly, "and so lost the stroke. Take warning from me, Bessie, and never be in a hurry when you play tennis."

"Hear, hear!" said Mr. Harding. "That's a golden rule. Beginners can't see it though. They are never happy unless they are rushing madly at a ball and getting under it, instead of letting it come to them. It's desperately annoying sometimes; don't you think so?" turning to me.

"Probably. But I am hardly a fair judge, being only a beginner myself."

"Oh! really now, I must apologise," said the young athlete, reddening.

"There is no occasion. I shall try to profit by your hint."

"Oh, you are very kind. Well, I assure you it is far better to take things coolly. Watch the other fellow's—I beg pardon—the other player's racket, and try to judge where and how he will return the ball. Don't get flurried, and whatever you do, don't get too near the ball. Volleying is not much good, except for practised players, because the ball is going faster than when taken on the bound, and you have less time to strike with ease and certainty—"

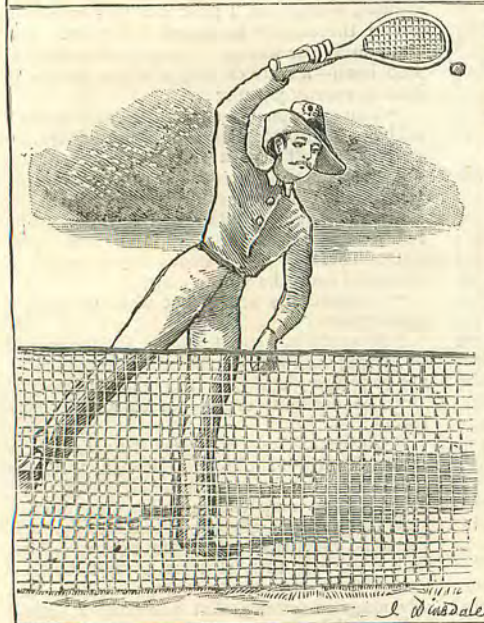
"Mr. Harding," said Una, "we are partners for the next set, and the others want odds; what shall we give?"

"Not more than a bisque."

"I call that shabby!" declared Lottie. "The very lowest odds that can be given—only one stroke during a whole set."

"You can make it worth double by taking it at the proper time. Take it to win a game, *i.e.*, at the score of 40-30, or advantage; but remember, a bisque may not be taken after the service has been delivered, and the server may not take a bisque after a fault, although the striker-out may do so. However, if you really have the conscience to ask for more, we will give you half-fifteen for a bisque, which means that you have a stroke given at the beginning of the second and every subsequent alternate game of a set, and once during a set we take a bisque in diminution of the odds."

This was agreed to, and play grew exciting, the score presently standing at four games all. A hurried consultation between Una and her partner ensued. "As a rule," said he, "when a bisque is received in diminution of odds, it should be taken to save the game, *i.e.*, to make the score deuce; but



VOLLEYING.  
VOLLEYING.

TAKING AIM BEFORE SERVING.  
WAITING FOR SERVE.



as we stand, the next game is so important we will not be bound by that."

"Do explain to me about odds," said I to Una, as we sauntered home in the twilight. Now Una was elated at the victory she and Mr. Harding had secured despite the "fifteen for a bisque" they had given. She answered with the air of a miniature autocrat—

"I must consider first the extent of your general knowledge. You are pretty well up in the single-handed game, I think; but I ought to tell you that at the end of the first game the striker-out becomes server, and the server becomes striker-out, and so on alternately in the subsequent games of the set; and when the latter is concluded, the players change sides."

"I noticed once this evening you had two players against one."

"Yes; that was the three-handed game. In that case the single player serves in every alternate game. If there are four players, the partner of the player who served in the first game serves in the third; and the partner of the player who served in the second game serves in the fourth, and so on. The four-handed game differs very little from the single-handed. The player who serves, and the player to whom the service is delivered, keep the back of the courts at their respective ends; the other players should stand rather more forward, somewhere about the service line. The ball served must drop within or upon the service line, half court line, and service side-line of the court diagonally opposite to that from which it is served, and you must never receive or return a service delivered to your partner. Afterwards, while the ball is in play, if it is so placed that you think your partner cannot reach it, by all means attempt to return it; but generally speaking, if the ball is going easily to your partner, let it pass. Oh! and one thing more—the strikers-out in the four-handed game do not change courts to receive the service before the end of the set."

"And now about the odds?"

"You understand a bisque, and when it is best to claim it, and you heard half-fifteen for a bisque (the next lowest odds) explained. If Lottie had not been against us we should perhaps have allowed them a greater advantage by not taking the bisque, then the odds would be half-fifteen. A stroke may be given at the beginning of every game; that is called fifteen; you can make it fifteen for a bisque, or simply fifteen. Thirty would be two strokes given at the beginning of every game of a set. Forty would be three strokes. Whatever other odds are agreed upon, a bisque may always be given to increase or to diminish them. Mr. Harding once gave Lottie forty and a bisque, and positively won."

I thought with Una this was a very clever feat, considering the skill of his antagonist. But it is astonishing what a good player will do. I knew one later who would often give *half the court*, which meant that he undertook to return every ball into either the right or the left court according to the agreement before beginning to play. If in the return the ball did not drop into the



A BACK-HANDED STROKE.  
VOLLEYING.



A LEFT-HANDED PLAYER.  
A DIFFICULT RETURN.



chosen court, it counted against him the same as though he had sent it beyond the external boundary-line; but the service is not limited to the chosen court, being delivered from right and left courts alternately, as usual. The odds of half-court can be given with the other odds, half-court and a bisque, for instance, half-court and half-fifteen, and so on.

The player just mentioned was the only brother of my especial crony and bosom friend. Their home was at Twickenham, and among my happiest recollections are the games we had on the spacious lawn that sloped down to the river. Although I was a novice at that time, thanks to Una's previous instructions, I was assured that in the matter of tennis my education was far from finished, and my friend's brother considerably took me in hand with a view of completing it. Jack—Clara called him Jack, and I, such is the force of example, soon fell into a like habit—possessed under his plain face and somewhat grave demeanour the kindest heart

imaginable—so everybody said. He made no pretensions to extra knowledge, yet seemed to be a sort of oracle to whom the household generally appealed in any difficulty, and with the comfortable conviction that "Jack will know," many a discussion was left for him to decide.

At my first game with him, I had no idea of the strength of my quiet antagonist; but was speedily perplexed at the persistency with which his balls dropped where I least expected them.

"It is very strange," I remarked, as, crimson with heat and vexation, I missed another stroke and lost the game.

"That is the worst of playing with Jack," laughed Clara. "He will place his balls in some judiciously chosen corner when there is nobody there."

"It is a great point to be able to place the ball," replied Jack. "It gives an immense advantage if you can return it to any part of the opposing court at will. In order to do so you have only to time the stroke."



"So you have told me a hundred times, but while I am timing the stroke the ball drops, and I wish I had not tried it."

"There is no reason why it should be so, if you are well aware of the results that will follow certain actions. We will suppose you to be standing ready to strike, with your face directed to the side of the court. If you wish to return the ball in a straight line, take it when nearly opposite your right shoulder. If you wish to return it, so that it will bear to the right, take it when it has passed your shoulder. And if your aim be to send it to the left, take it before it reaches your shoulder. The body, you will observe, need not be moved at all in order to place the ball. Still, there is no question but that when it is opposite the right shoulder the striker has the fullest command over it. Therefore, unless you are pressed for time, it is as well to shift slightly to the left or the right, according to the direction you wish the ball to take, instead of trusting always to the strokes made before it reaches, or after it has passed, the shoulder."

"One always is pressed for time when the ball is in the air," said I, "and my sole object is usually to get it safely over the net again—anywhere."

"Your balls are often very well cut," said Jack.

This being a new word to me, I begged to be enlightened with regard to it, and found that the ball, when struck as I had been directed, by moving the racket downwards and forwards, and holding it with an open face, was said to be *cut*.

"Everyone whose play is worth mention makes constant use of cut," remarked Jack, striking an imaginary ball as he spoke. "Still, there are exceptions. If a ball is volleyed in front of the striker, for instance, or when a ball, being close to the net, must be tossed; or when the adversary is close to the net, and you would seize the chance to send the ball over his head, it is useless to put on cut."

"You will think me very stupid," said I, rather bewildered by these business-like terms, but I fail to see the difference between cutting and any other mode of striking."

Jack did not scorn the simplicity of the question; he answered very kindly, "When you cut the ball you bring the racket (held in the manner before described) somewhat down upon the ball. When you do not cut the ball, you toss or pat it over the net."

"And what is the advantage of cut?"

"You can return the ball more sharply, and hit at it harder without sending it out of court. Naturally, in consequence of the sharper stroke a cut ball drops more quickly to the ground than one not cut, and your adversary finds proportionate difficulty in keeping the ball in play."

"It is worth something to have a brother in the Lawn Tennis Club," said Clara. "Jack, since Bessie is so eager for information, pray tell her about twist."

"Let me loosen the boat first, and take you on the river." And presently, while we glided under the bridge at Richmond, and past the ferry renowned in song, he obligingly resumed his explanations.

"Twist occurs when the ball is not purely cut, but struck on one side or the other. It is very effective when used with judgment; but to do that one must be an experienced player."

"A member of the L.T.C.," said Clara, slyly.

"When a ball is twisted it moves in a lateral curve through the air, and after contact with the ground, takes a direction to the right or to the left of the player who struck it. Underhand twist sends it to the right; overhand twist sends it to the left.

"Whether a ball be cut or twisted by your adversary, you must not forget to make allowance for the cut or twist. Watch the motion of his racket and the course of the ball, that you may judge, before the ball drops, what direction it will take. A purely cut ball continues its progress rapidly after touching the ground. Stand well back from it. If a ball be delivered with underhand twist, keep to the left of it, or you will be unable to return it freely with the arm sufficiently extended. But when overhand twist has been used, stand almost in front of the spot where the ball drops."

Clara soon considered all these details very dry, so, to avoid wearying her, Jack and I insensibly got into the way of strolling round the garden when the rackets were laid aside to discuss the tactics of the game.

"You are rather fond of volleying," he said one day; "but you should remember that the ball then scarcely requires to be hit at all. A very slight touch, made by advancing the racket-face gently to the ball, will send it over the net. When volleyed nearly in a line with the striker the racket should be brought up, with the rough side out, in front of the player's face, and steadied by placing the thumb upright on the handle."

At another time we discussed the half-volley—a difficult and not-to-be-recommended stroke, made by bringing the racket smartly down to the ground, and taking the ball at the moment it is commencing its forward motion after dropping. And back-handed play, in which the position of the body proper for the forehand stroke has to be reversed; and the racket is held with the rough face upward in the same way and at the same angle as the smooth face is used in the forehand stroke.

In fact, the length and frequency of these conversations soon drew upon us some gentle raillery, which Jack parried by remarking that I had a singular talent for the game which it was a pity not to develop by a course of oral instruction. Subsequent events, while they have not diminished the pleasure, have modified the pride with which I heard this announcement. It was most likely due to the fact that the speaker was beginning to see all my doings through rose-coloured spectacles.

Jack and I have a tennis ground of our own now. But the "singular talent" notwithstanding, I still cannot claim to be more than a moderately good player. My husband says I am too precipitate—seldom giving myself time to watch the object of my opponent's stroke, and to calculate the effect of my own. "But ladies do not generally err on the side of deliberation. And perhaps," he adds, with a provoking smile, "that is one reason why it would be hard to find for them a better exercise than lawn tennis."

## LAURA LEIGH.

### A TALE OF HIGHBRIDGE PAPER MILLS.

By M. M. POLLARD, Author of "Zara; or, My Granddaughter's Money," "Only Me," &c., &c., &c.

#### CHAPTER II.

##### LAURA'S IMPRESSIONS.



BUT we are not going to follow Mr. Ashton as he escorted the two cousins over the extent of his bewildering mills, nor are we going to track his foot-

steps from floor to floor of the huge building, that seemed to Laura Leigh to be without limit or ending.

"Of course you will only care to see the finishing process of paper-making, when the work becomes pretty and interesting?" said Mr. Ashton, looking at Miss Leigh with an expression of inquiry in his face.

"Oh, why? That will be like looking at an imperfect picture, reading a book without the beginning chapters; please let me see the whole process."

"But some parts of it are far from picturesque. For instance, our English paper does not date its origin from the waving reeds of the papyrus, growing beside some sleepy Egyptian river."

Laura laughed brightly.

"Oh, I have heard all about the rags; let me see them."

"If you really wish to do so, I will show you the way."

And so they stood presently at the door of a large loft, lighted from windows in the roof, where the sunlight streamed through, and fell on unlovely masses of rubbish, styled the "rags of all nations."

All that could be had been done in the way of ventilation, but the perpetual stirring and shifting and sorting made the air heavy with unsavoury odours, stifling with closeness, and thick with dancing motes of dust.

Laura did not so much notice this discomfort, as she did the scores of young girls, most of them not older than herself, who were the busy workers in the loft.

At her first appearance in the doorway, like a brilliant apparition in the chamber of gloom, all the young girls had risen to their feet as by one simultaneous impulse, and had stood for a few moments in silent surprise and admiration, staring at their splendid visitor.

"What a gush of respect! Who is it intended for?" whispered the curate's wife to Vincent Ashton. "I am sure not for me; they see me far too often to be surprised into such demonstrations," she said.

"It is in honour of Miss Leigh," re-