



JANUARY.

**CURLING MATCH.**

Our northern brethren have a fine athletic game, peculiar to the country, called *curling*—a word strange to southern ear, at least in connection with a manly sport. Winter is the season for enjoying the exercise, and when the Scottish lakes are frozen over, *curling* becomes the order of the day. Our engraving will at once explain the character of the game; but although the means are simple—requiring no expensive horses, well-kept hounds, valuable yachts, preserved manors, or other costly adjuncts—yet for sturdy exercise and high excitement, *curling* is not excelled by any of the more exclusive enjoyments. Whilst the skill and dexterity of the player are tested to the utmost, the very progress of the sport tends to increase the sum of that strength and activity which it calls into play; and health and pleasant recreation go hand in hand together in sisterly companionship.

**ANGLING.**

Fishing with the artificial fly is the most scientific mode of angling, requiring great tact and practice to make the flies neatly, and to use them with success. The learner cannot do better than go out with an old hand, and imitate his movements. It would extend far beyond the space we can afford in this almanack to enter into detail, but refer the reader to "Blair's Encyclopaedia of Rural Sports." Fly-fishing with either the natural or artificial flies does not commence till about the end of April. Bottom fishing may be practised all the year round with varied success. In this month, chub, pike, and roach, are the only fish that can be taken; in the middle of the day is the most seasonable time, provided the water is tolerably clear, and free from ice. Pike may be caught by spinning, and at this season the best bait for chub or roach is bullock's brains, pith, or greaves.

On a day when it may be freezing, the water from the line will cause the large rings to fill with ice; the easiest plan to get rid of this is to put the ring into your mouth, and afterwards keep the line on the move to prevent it from freezing.

When a Jack takes the bait, on no account give him the least check: where trees are growing in the water, it is a famous harbour. When fishing where trees are in the water, put the point of the rod under water; as it will allow him generally to go clear, you will feel by his discontinuing to take the line out; when he stops, keep the line tight; and should he wait for a few minutes only; instead of the required time ten minutes, do not let him have more line.

**HINTS FOR ANGLERS.**

It is generally understood that when two or three persons are angling in the same stream, there shall be a distance of thirty yards between them.

If the learner wish to become a complete angler, he must use fine tackle; as the skill and care which such tackle requires will soon make him a master of the art.

When the tackle breaks, the angler must not repine at the accident, but do his best to remedy it, by speedily repairing the damage, and resuming his sport.

Avoid sitting on the grass.

Prefer angling at mill-tails, and in deep water, under overhanging banks, and by the entrance of small streams.

Let your line (with the plummet) remain in the water to stretch while you ground-bait.

Choose a mild cloudy day with little wind or fine rain, with the water just coloured.

A number of fine shot is to be preferred to a few large ones.

The Thames, at Richmond, Hampton, Twickenham, Shepperton; the Mole; the Brent; the New River; the Ravensbourne, at Lewisham; Dagenham Breach; Pond on Hampstead-heath; Pond on Clapham-common; Pond in Hornsey-wood; Pond at Wanstead; Regent's canal; Croydon canal; and Camberwell canal.

January presents many amusements to sportsmen. Stag and fox-hunting are in the ascendant; and coursing, if not frosty, is in full spirit: while partridges, woodcocks, snipe, and pheasants, are all fair game for those who can handle a fowling-piece. If the weather be "fair and frosty," the lover of out-door exercises may indulge in the healthful and exhilarating amusement of skating.

**IN-DOOR AMUSEMENTS.**

January is one of the most festive months of the year. Its calendarial festivities are New Year's Day and Twelfth Day.

Although the custom of presenting New Year's gifts is now but little observed in this country, the day is observed by many a mirthful party.

There is not a more rational mode of amusing a party than by optical exhibitions, such as the Magic Lantern, Phantasmagoria, &c. The following is, however, a more novel amusement:—

The *Thaumatrope*, or *Wonder-Turner*, is an exceedingly amusing toy, of very simple construction and pleasing effect. It is made in the following manner:—Cut out a piece of card-board of circular form, and fix to it six pieces of string, three on each side. Paint on one side of the card a bird, and on the other a cage; being careful to draw them upside down to each other, otherwise the desired effect will not be produced. When showing the toy, take hold of the centre strings between the forefinger and thumb of each hand, close to the card, and twist or twirl the card rapidly round; when lo! the bird will appear snugly enclosed in its cage. The principle on which this pleasing toy acts, is, that the image of any object received on the retina or optic nerve, which is at the back of the eye, is retained in the mind for about eight seconds after the object causing the impression is withdrawn; consequently, the impression of the painting on one side of the card is not obliterated ere the painting on the other side is brought before the eye; it therefore follows that both sides are seen at once. The subjects suited to the *Thaumatrope* are very varied: amongst others, the following are well calculated for display: a juggler throwing up two balls may be drawn on one side of a card, and two balls only on the other, and according to the pairs of strings employed, he will seem to toss two, three, or four balls; the body and legs of a man on one side, and his head and arms on the other; a candle and its flame; a mouse and a trap, and a horse and his rider; this last is a very good one, as by using the different pairs of strings, the relative positions of man and horse may be varied most singularly.

Twelfth Night, though comparatively but little observed, occasions the assembling of many cheerful circles. Drawing for King and Queen may be amusing enough; but we have seen an ingenious attempt to turn the custom to better account by substituting for the usual grotesque Twelfth Night representations, portraits of the leading characters of Shakspeare's plays, each having beneath it a quotation from the "part." This is a graceful combination of amusement and high intellect.