

THE GAME OF QUILTS.

QUILT pitching is one of the most attractive and healthful forms of recreation. Skill is a predominating feature, but to master the game, strength, agility, nerve, and good eyesight are necessary qualifications. In Scotland and in the north of England it is no uncommon thing to see thousands of spectators at a match between players of prominence, in which big stakes are depending on the result, and speculation upon the outcome of the different battles is a special feature.

In America, New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Fall River, Providence, and several other New England cities contain the best facilities for pitching, and the cream of the players in the East, and Pittsburg, Chicago, St. Louis, and Denver in the West.

For the proper display of the beauties of the game a spacious and well regulated ground should be provided. Players should not be cramped, and spectators should receive every opportunity of witnessing the sport with comfort. A championship rink should be about eighty feet long and twenty-five feet wide. There is plenty of space outside of the actual pitching distance to secure the utmost fairness to the contestants.

In addition to the proper arrangement of the ground and ends, it is necessary that a player should have a set of quilts exactly suited to his tastes, a competent director, and a man to look after the condition of his quilts.

An expert is quite particular regarding the construction of his quilts, or "irons," as he terms them. If a set of quilts has been used a number of years, and an accident should befall them and he would be obliged to use another pair, no matter whether they were the exact model of the old ones, he would be apt to make a strong objection, and in nine times out of ten it would impair the value of his play. The quilts most in use among experts are made of malleable iron, oval on top, with a hand clutch made within the ring. Their average weight is from seven to nine pounds each, but players who depend upon their strength principally to carry them through in a game use quilts weighing as heavy as fourteen pounds each. The diameter of an "iron" is generally the bone of contention in making matches, for the more spread the greater space it occupies around the pin. Therefore the diameter is restricted to less than nine inches. Quilts are sold by the pound, the ruling rate for iron prevailing. A well-prepared set of nine-pound "irons" costs from \$2 to \$2.50. They are not easily or often damaged, but the greatest danger of their being rendered useless is by being hit with force by a pitched quilt and split in two or nicked so as to destroy the clutch.

In all important tournaments, in contests for big stakes, or in matches in which experts are involved, sixty-one points constitute the

game. If the struggle is close the time occupied in finishing the game is between three and four hours. Besides the contestants other persons concerned in a competition are a referee, whose decisions are final; two judges, one for each player; a scorer, and a director. A contestant after delivering his quoit from one end should have nothing to do until called upon to pitch from the other end. It is his judge's duty to denote the position of his quoit at the pin, and if entitled to a point to so claim it. All disputes between the judges are brought to the attention of the referee, and his decision settles matters. When a point is made it is recorded upon a blackboard, which should be in view of almost every person on the ground.

Next to the contestants in point of prominence is a director or "whiter." A man well versed in the intricacies of this position is the life of a competition. His usefulness to the man he directs is shown in many ways. Matches are frequently won and lost by a competent or incompetent director. He should be a man with a good disposition, yet prompt to take advantage of all technical points and see that his player has fair play. It is his duty to station himself at the opposite ends of the rink in use, and by means of a piece of white paper stuck in the clay direct his principal where to place the quoit. Besides this a director should possess the faculty of giving his man constant encouragement and to keep his mind free from the fear of defeat.

The attitude of a man at the mark goes a good way to prove whether he is an experienced quoit pitcher or not. Awkwardness is a great drawback to a person who is ambitious to become an expert, and while he may upon ordinary occasions be able to play a fair game, it would be impossible for him to test his strength with any degree of success against one who combines all the attributes of a skilful pitcher. To deliver a quoit correctly it is necessary to stand erect, with feet close together, the quoit firmly clutched and brought up almost level with the eyes. After gauging the point to be reached, the arm should be thrown well back, and after getting the full swing, stepping out with the left foot, the "iron" should be sent to its destination. The greatest obstacle in the way of a successful pitcher is the lack of courage. No matter how perfect the position may be, or how correctly you may gauge the distance, without courage the quoit is very apt to leave the hand irregularly and land far away from the point aimed at.

RULES FOR QUITTS.

1. The distance shall be eighteen yards.
2. The ends to be of stiff clay, three feet in diameter.
3. An iron or steel pin shall be placed in the centre of the end, with the top flush with the clay.
4. Quoits not to exceed eight and a half inches in diameter, or be less than three and a half inches in the bore, and not to exceed two and a quarter inches in the web.
5. A player must stand within four feet six inches of the centre of the end, at right angles with the rink, when delivering his quoit.
6. A player shall not be allowed to examine the position of his quoit until his opponent has played. He must stand three feet or more behind the end played from until his opponent has delivered his quoit. Players to be allowed to name a person to put up a mark as a guide at the end to which he is about to play.

7. All measurements to be from centre of the pin. Clay or other matter to be removed, if necessary, to measure nearest part of quoit. All measurements to be made with compasses.

8. All quoits played outside a radius of eighteen inches from the centre of the pin shall be foul.

9. If one or more quoits are lapped, the quoit easiest measured shall be measured and drawn, in order to measure the other or others.

10. Should a quoit be broken during a match the measure must be taken from the nearest portion of the quoit to the pin, and the player shall be privileged to use another pair to finish his game.

11. The use of improper language, or any act perpetrated to disconcert or interrupt the player while in the act of throwing his quoit, is prohibited. The player to have the privilege of throwing his quoit over again in the event of such having taken place.

RACKETS, SQUASH BALL, AND COURT TENNIS.

Rackets.

THE way of playing is as follows:—Three feet and a half from the ground a white chalk line must be drawn along the wall against which the ball is to be struck. Any stroke which sends the ball below this line does not count. Along the ground, in front of the wall, and parallel with the wall, four lines are drawn, forming bases. The two former of these are called the in-hand, the two latter the out-hand bases. The players are either two or four in number; if four, two play in partnership, and either strikes as the ball comes nearest to him, a stroke from either player reckoning for or against his side. We will suppose two competitors on the racket ground. One of them has to guard the in-hand bases, and is called the *in-hand* player; the other the out-hand bases, and is called the *out-hand* player. Each stands in one of his own bases. The one on whom the lot falls to begin strikes the ball against the wall. We will suppose the in-hand player beginning the game. He must strike the ball so that, rebounding from the wall, it falls into one of the *out-hand bases*. If he fail to do this, if the ball strikes the wall below the chalked line, or falls into one of his own bases, or goes over the wall, his adversary counts *one*. If, on the other hand, the ball, rebounding from the wall, comes to the earth in an out-hand base, the out-hand player must strike it back against the wall at the rebound, in such a manner that it shall bound off into an in-hand base; and thus the players go on, each striking the ball in turn against the wall and into his adversary's ground, until one of them fails to strike it, or strikes it under the line, or over the wall, or into one of his own bases, when the other counts *one*. And so the game continues, until one player or one side has gained a certain number of notches, and is declared the winner. The number of notches to a game is usually fixed at fifteen. Some players practise *volleying*; that is, they strike the ball with the racket before it reaches the ground, without waiting for the rebound. This is perplexing to the adversary, as the ball comes into his ground before he expects it. But on various grounds the practice is objectionable.