

## THE GAMES AND AMUSEMENTS OF THE MONTH.

AUGUST.



AUGUST is, as a rule, a good month for those who are fond of Rowing, both on the river and on the sea. Oarsmen, however, must always remember that rowing on the river or lake and rowing on the sea are two very different things. In river-work, where there are no waves, the oar should be "feathered" as close to the water as possible—that is to say, the oar should be turned by a twist of the wrist at the conclusion of each stroke, so that the blade is brought back for the next stroke parallel to, or level with, the surface of the water. The object of feathering is to avoid the resistance of the air in bringing the oar back into position for the next stroke; and it will be evident to all, that the nearer to the water the oar or scull is on the backward journey the less distance will it have to traverse—the difference, in fact, of the curve  $A \overset{\frown}{B}$  and the straight line  $A B$ . But when rowing on the sea the waves must be taken into account, and it would never do to keep to the straight line, for by doing so the oar, in getting back to position, would cut through the waves and sadly impede the progress of the boat. In sea-rowing, therefore, the oar *must* be brought back more or less in a curve, according to the height of the waves.

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Canoeing is a dangerous amusement for all who cannot swim; but if a boy or girl can swim without difficulty *in clothes*, to paddle along in a canoe is a very pleasant way of spending an afternoon. One



word of caution, however, is necessary. A tarpaulin is generally used to cover the well-hole of the canoe;

but this should never be tied round the body, or fixed so that the occupant cannot free himself from the boat. That end of the tarpaulin which covers the feet may be fastened, but the other end should always be loose.

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Lawn Tennis, Badminton, and Croquet have, to a great extent, taken the place of the good old lawn-games that were popular a century or two ago, but Quoits and Bowls—the latter of which was played as far back as the reign of Edward the Second—still have their devotees, and deservedly so too. In playing quoits the great thing is to pitch the iron ring so that when it falls it may cut directly into the turf, and remain where it is pitched without rolling over. It should,



in fact, fall as shown in the accompanying illustration, and in order that it may do this, it should be held as shown in the figure, with the thumb on the upper or rounded side, the forefinger resting in the dent on the rim, and the other fingers on the lower or flattened side.

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One hint may be given to beginners who play bowls for the first time: pay particular attention to the *bias* of the ball used—that is, to the tendency to swerve either to the right or to the left, which is caused by the fact that the balls used are not round, but are flattened one side and elongated the other. It is when the ball is rolling very slowly that the effect of the bias is most noticeable, and practice alone will enable the player to judge with precision what allowances must be made for this curl of the ball.

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With regard to the six-handed game of Lawn Tennis, mentioned last month, it will readily be understood that when there are three players on either side of the net, it will not always be easy for each one to see which ball he should take, and which he should leave to his partners. But a little practice will materially lessen the difficulty; and in the six-handed, just as in the four-handed, game, players must learn not to be selfish; they must not attempt to make a brilliant stroke when they know their partner is in a far better position for returning



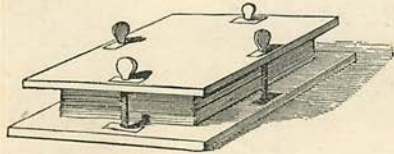
the ball. Many and many a game is lost by the tendency to attempt too much, and to rob one's partner of his legitimate strokes.

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In the summer months the collection of Wild Flowers and Ferns is a very pleasant occupation, but very many do not know how to preserve their treasures when they have obtained them. One of the first points for the collector to remember is that all flowers and plants intended to be preserved should be gathered on a fine day, so that they may be as free from moisture as possible. The next process is to free the specimens from their natural moisture by compression; but if the stems be at all succulent, they should first be killed by placing them in hot water.

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In pressing the flowers or ferns, what is known as a botanist's press should be used. This, as is shown in the illustration, merely consists of two flat



smooth boards, fitted with screws which can be turned by the finger and thumb. The screws and the upper board having been removed, some sheets of botanical paper, or even ordinary blotting-paper, should be placed on the lower board. On this paper the specimens should be laid, the various parts of each flower or fern being carefully spread and arranged. Further sheets of blotting-paper should then be placed upon the specimens, and then the upper board should be laid on the top, and the press should be gently screwed together. The plants should be freed from moisture gradually, and for this reason only slight pressure should be applied at first. The paper should be removed every second or third day, and new sheets should be substituted. When quite dry, the plants may be mounted in albums, or on separate sheets of paper, by means of thread or gum. In case a botanist's press can neither be bought nor made, the sheets of blotting-paper containing the specimens may be laid between heavy books.

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Sea-weeds may be preserved in very much the same way as flowers and ferns, but before being dried they should be thoroughly cleaned by placing them in a shallow pan or saucer containing fresh water. To remove all the salt and any parasites that may cling to them, each branch should be gently agitated every now and then, and for this

purpose a bone knitting-needle will be found very useful. Before pressing the specimens, each little spray should be laid out in its proper position, and in doing this great care must be taken, for some kinds of sea-weed are very fragile.

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Collectors of Sea-shells should always be careful to soak their treasures for some hours in fresh water, to remove the salt and prevent it from acting chemically upon the lime, of which the shells are composed, and destroying the surface. A very soft brush should be used in cleaning shells, as the outer skin of many of them is very delicate, and may easily be rubbed away. When shells are used to ornament boxes or other articles, they should be cemented on with plaster of Paris, or with a composition of plaster and isinglass.

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"Ring the Bell" is a capital new out-door game for a summer morning in the country, when a group of children of various ages meet and wish to have some fun. This game must be played in a garden full of trees and shrubs, with plenty of odd nooks for hiding-places. The larger and more old-fashioned the garden is, the better will it be suitable for the game. One of the players takes a hand-bell and rings it, while he counts up to one hundred, standing still with closed eyes. Call out the last number very loudly, so that the hidden ones may hear. The ringer must then begin to move about in search of the hiders. If the garden be an extensive one, he is allowed to run as well as walk, but in either case he must continue ringing the bell vigorously, never letting the sound stop for an instant. His object is to find one of the players, and they must keep out of sight by constantly moving, under cover, from place to place, when they hear the sound of the bell near them.

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As soon as the ringer spies one of the hiders, he gives up the bell to the person found, who at once begins to count one hundred (ringing all the time) while the former ringer runs off to hide. Of course he soon comes across some merry group of companions, who welcome him among them now that he is free from the bell. The game may be kept up for some hours if the players are clever at hiding. Winding paths, haystacks, low walls, the sheltering branches of trees, greenhouses, and arbours are fine hiding-places, where you may dodge the ringer so successfully that he will pass unconsciously by, thinking that all the hiders must be at the other end of the garden. A tin filled with small stones or a musical-box can supply the place of a bell, if one is not easily forthcoming.