

TENNIS.

BY EUSTACE H. MILES,*

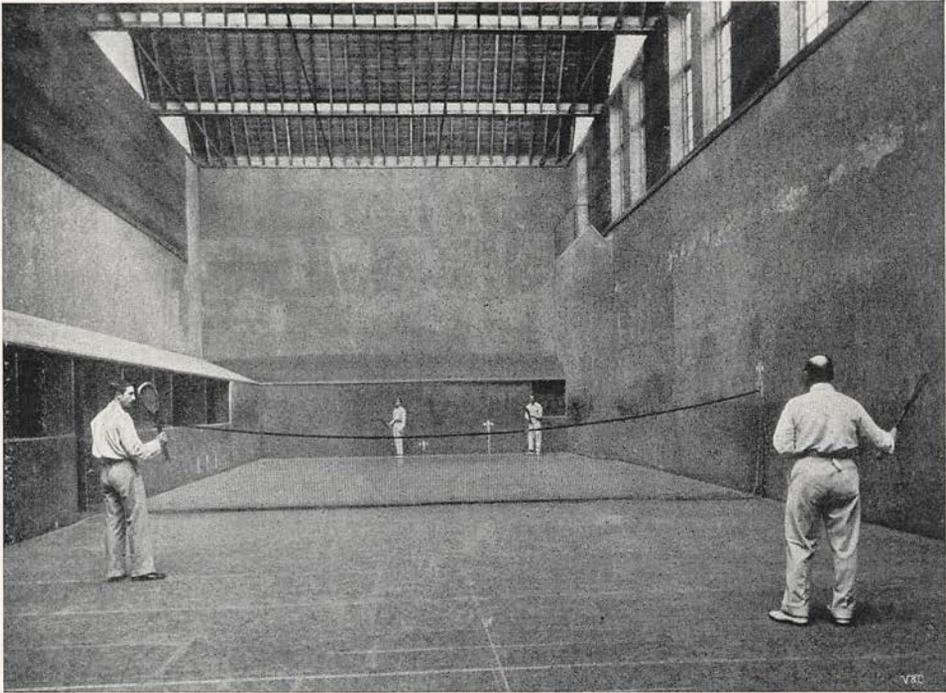
Amateur Tennis Champion and Holder of the Gold Prize.

Photographs by H. Mason, Cambridge.

THERE is a good deal of confusion in the minds of many people as to the various games in which one has to hit a ball above a certain height before it has bounced twice. I remember one lady, who knew that I was fond of fives and rackets, asking me if I would not like to play lawn-fives on her lawn-fives court, whereas another

the name of their game; to them it is "tennis," and to speak of lawn-tennis as tennis is the greatest insult you can offer them. For them tennis is tennis, and lawn-tennis is lawn-tennis, or else—pat-ball.

Now, why is it that there is such confusion between the various games, and why is it that tennis is so little known?



A FOUR-HANDED GAME: JIM HARRADINE, THE CAMBRIDGE MARKER, ABOUT TO SERVE.

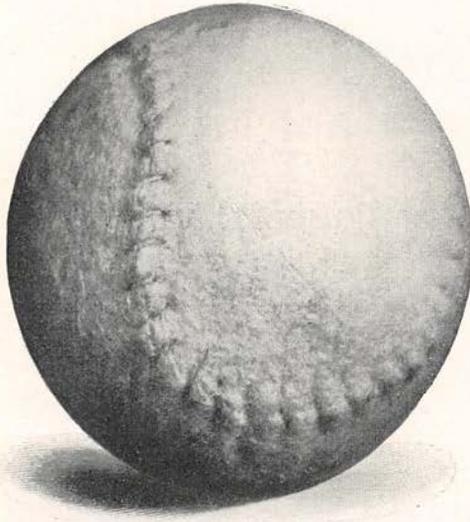
day she called the game lawn-rackets; the court then became a lawn-racket court. She imagined that fives and rackets, tennis and lawn-tennis were all the same game, being called by different names, perhaps, for the sake of variety. Squash-rackets was a form of exercise that she had never heard of.

Tennis players are very particular about

First of all there are the technical terms, such as "dedans," "tambour," "grille," "chase," and "boasted force." These seem enough to frighten anyone, even though they are not worse than the technical terms of golf and are far less numerous than those of the medical profession; yet this will certainly be one reason why tennis is so little known or understood.

Secondly, it is undoubtedly expensive, partly because of the expense of building

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TENNIS BALL, ACTUAL SIZE.

and keeping up the huge court and of paying the markers; but it is only fair to remember that lawn-tennis with the best conditions (especially plenty of new balls) is probably not a penny cheaper—in wet weather or on bad or dirty courts it is a great deal dearer.

Thirdly, tennis is little if at all played by certain sets of people—for instance, it is not known at any school, while rackets is played both at the public schools and in the Army.

Yet tennis is well worth studying for many reasons, and not least of all because of those who have played it! Shakespeare alludes to kings playing the game, and the son of one of the Georges was killed by a tennis ball. Among modern players might be mentioned Lord Windsor, the Hon. Alfred Lyttelton, Sir Edward Grey, the Duke of York, and Sir William Hart-Dyke. And to the list might be added many leading lawn-tennis players of the day, such as Doherty, Mahony, and Nesbit.

The game has another interest besides the list of those who have played it, and that is that it is very old. It need not be very old to be the mother of lawn-tennis, but the old-fashioned courts and the old allusions to the game show that it goes back into very early times. The building at Hampton Court will be familiar to many readers, and there are few who will not regret the removal of the old court at Lord's on which the clock used to stand.

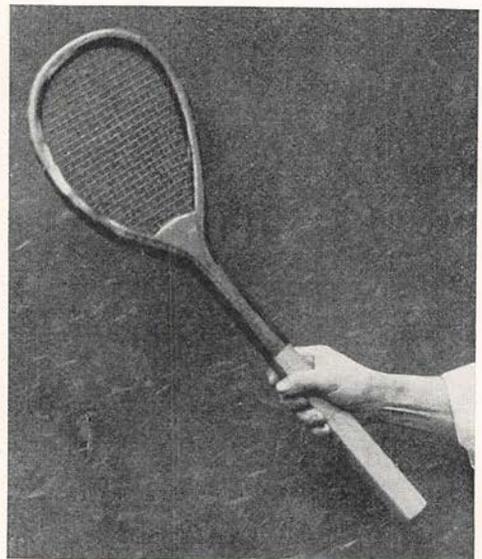
The great charm of tennis is its variety. In tennis, as in lawn-tennis, one tries to hit

the ball over the net and past the other player or over his head; but in tennis there is much more choice—for example, there are the side-walls and the back-walls, and there are many openings into which the ball may be hit.

The history of the game is not altogether clear. Mr. Julian Marshall has given the best account of it in his "Annals of Tennis." In its early stages it was played with a ball something like the present ball, but this was hit with the hand. Probably this was found painful, especially on a cold day, and the players took to wearing gloves, and then, so that they might strike the ball with more effect, they put gut across their fingers. Later on, to give leverage, they put the gut not on their fingers, but on a wooden framework—thus we have the beginnings of the racket.

This gut was so loose that one could not hit nearly so far or so fast with it as with a modern racket, which is also very heavy. On this page we see a modern racket, being gripped by the hand; this racket weighs about seventeen ounces—that is to say, two or three ounces more than a lawn-tennis racket.

Since olden times there has been a considerable change in other things besides the racket. The ball is now covered with cloth. It is about the size of a lawn-tennis ball, but about as hard as a cricket ball. The court now has a hard, even floor, and it is shut in above by a roof. Dumas' novels show that this was not the case in early



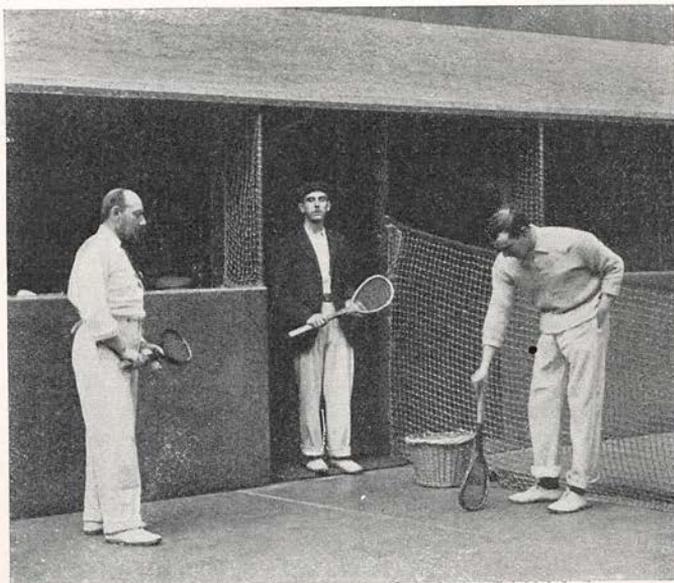
GRIP OF THE RACKET FOR A FOREHAND STROKE.

times, when, for example, a player could convey a message beyond the walls by attaching it to a ball and hitting the ball outside the court. Now, also, the court is much "faster," and the balls come quicker. The play itself has changed considerably. In olden times, when your opponent made certain good strokes, it was etiquette to bow courteously and to let the ball fall to the ground. We cannot imagine a modern player doing this; it would be almost as ridiculous as for a cricketer to stand aside and let a good ball bowl him. In those days there was not much running about; there was stately grace, but there was not enough violent exercise to demand flannels as a necessity. An old-fashioned

player bitterly complained, not long ago, that nowadays flannels are necessary at real tennis, because one is in danger of getting quite warm! Indeed, we see many players rushing about over the court almost as energetically as if they were playing football. Modern tennis must be classed as one of the most vigorous of games; it is not much easier work than rackets. There are long rallies, which are curiously enough called "rests"; there is hard hitting with a tightly strung racket, and there is often a very fast service also. There is much volleying, as in lawn-tennis, and there is a good deal of that beautiful stroke, the half-volley, of which Caridia is the exponent in lawn-tennis.

Let us now look at the court as seen in the illustration on page 606. We are sitting in what is called the *dedans*; we are beyond the back-wall of the court, and we are protected from violence by a netting. Facing us, and beyond the net in the middle of the court, is old Jim Harradine taking a back-hand stroke in the far right-hand corner; we shall speak of him again directly. This place where we are sitting is a winning opening—that is to say, if Jim hits the ball into it during the play it will count one point to him.

Just behind Jim, and in the extreme right-hand corner, is a square opening called the *grille*; a ball which is hit into this is also a winning stroke, and makes a bang which shows that the mark has been reached. What



SPINNING FOR SIDES: THE MARKER IS IN HIS BOX, AND HAS NOT YET PUT THE BASKET IN ITS HOLE.

player does not love that bang, if *he* has hit the ball?

On the right-hand wall, not far from this grille, is a projecting buttress coming at an angle. It is called the *tambour*, though one lawn-tennis player of some note prefers to call it "the hump." A ball which hits this will come off, not straight, but at a slant; the tambour is not unlike the "pepperbox" in the Eton fives court. These three peculiarities are among the great charms of the game.

Another charm is the fact that the court (like a racket court) has a back-wall and side-walls, so that you can often let a ball go past you, and can take it after it has hit the back-wall.

There used to be another winning "hazard" called the *lune*; this is now done away with.

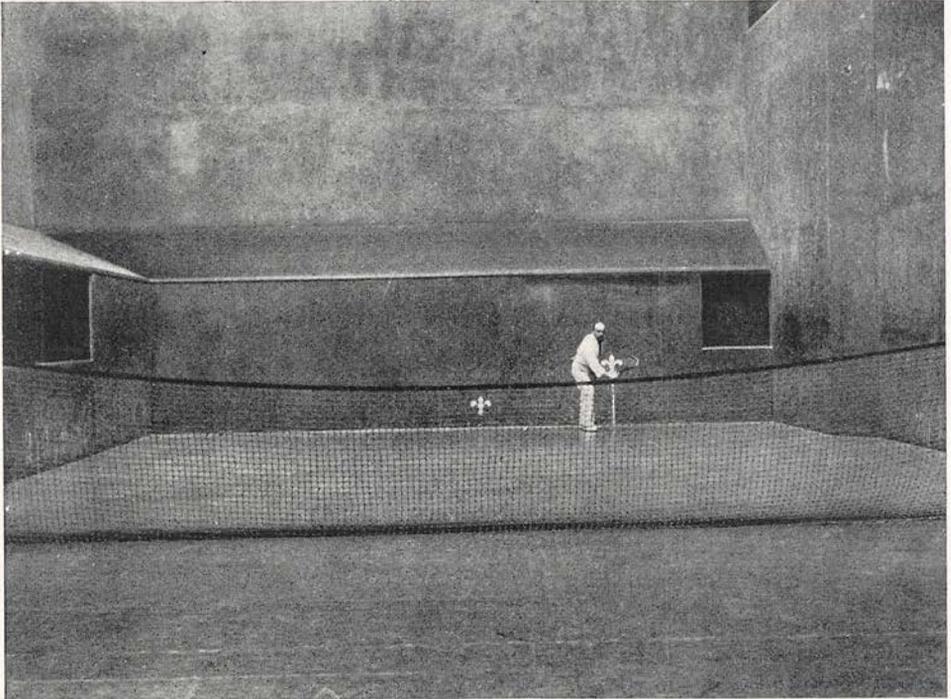
The last of the winning openings is the farthest gallery on the other side of the net, and is called the *winning gallery*. The galleries on the left-hand side of the court are netted over, so that spectators of the game shall not be killed. To stand too near this netting, however, is almost as dangerous as to stand too near the bars of the monkey-house at the Zoo. Even through the protection the ball may still do considerable business. Over the galleries is a *penthouse*, which slopes inwards; there is a penthouse also at the further end of the court, and one above the *dedans*.

Among the galleries and in their midst there is the entrance door; in this stands the marker; he calls out the score and collects the balls. In our illustration the players are spinning for choice of sides, and the marker is waiting in his "box"; occasionally the marker gets some very nasty balls hit at him, but he soon gets to know how to dodge them. Markers should be good boxers.

Notice the large basket of balls; generally six or nine dozen are used at a time, and they are put into an open box, which is

All about the floor, except for a part of the further side of the court, are lines, whose purpose we shall see directly. When I say that they are for chases, I leave the reader no wiser than before.

It is not surprising that a certain lawn-tennis player should have complained that the game would be very good if it were not for the "furniture"; the "hump" and the "boxes" and the "left-luggage department" used to aggravate him beyond measure, to say nothing of the scoring of the game itself, on which we shall now touch lightly.



TAKING A BACK-HANDER UNDER THE "GRILLE": THE BUTTRESS ON THE WALL TO THE RIGHT IS THE "TAMBOUR."

almost inside the dedans. It is a great advantage that the players have not always to be running about outside the court, picking up balls which they have hit there. What a luxury it would be to play with nine dozen balls at lawn-tennis! One sometimes sees the marker throw the basket from just by the dedans to a hole in the court just by the marker's box. If he throws it well the basket settles down neatly into the hole; but there are not many markers who are good at the trick. It is one of those graceful arts on which the markers of former days used to pride themselves.

The players or the marker arrange what odds or handicap the weaker player shall receive. This may be very much as in lawn-tennis, or else one player may have to confine his strokes to "half the court," or he may not be allowed to hit into the winning openings; or he may play with some strange implement, such as a cricket-bat. Personally I find this to be very good practice. Pettitt, the American champion, is very good with a piece of wood like a bit of an armchair; other players have used bootjacks and soda-water bottles.

Having arranged the odds, one of the

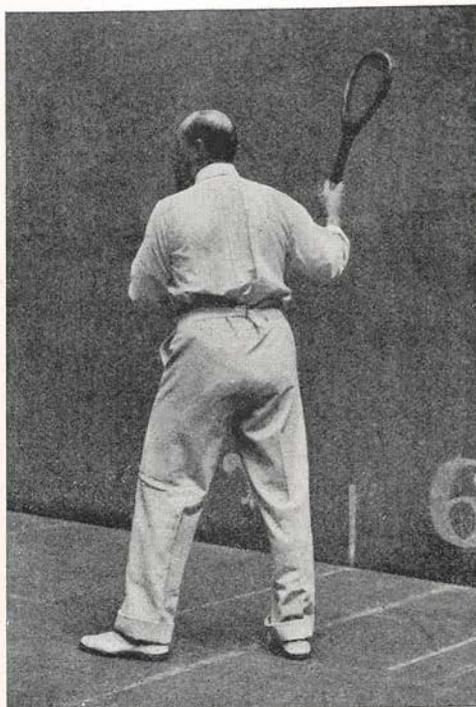
players comes to the side where we are sitting (in the *dedans*), and serves. The service is always from this *dedans* side, but it is very varied.

One of the illustrations on this page shows a service high into the air; such a service one seldom sees in lawn-tennis; there is a special kind of high service which for obvious reasons is called the giraffe.

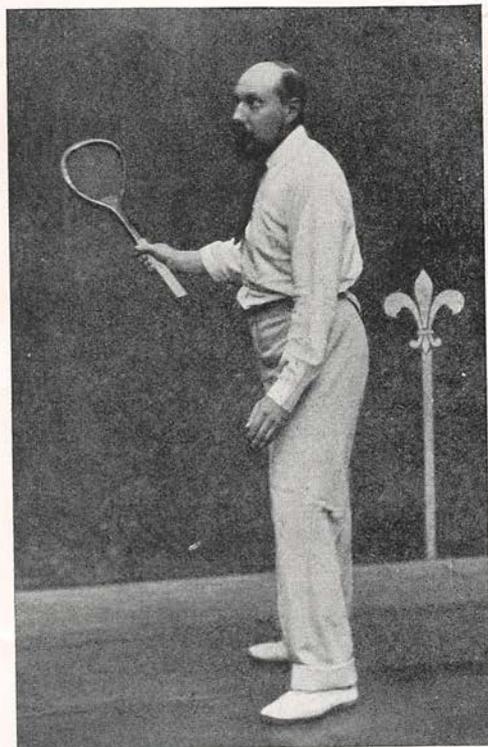
The second illustration on this page shows what is called a side-wall service; it will hit the side-wall above the penthouse (on the left), and will then hit the penthouse itself (for every service must do that), and will come down towards or on to the back-wall.

This differs from a lawn-tennis service in being, as a rule, very heavily cut or sliced, so that when it has reached the back-wall it will drop down suddenly. The server can stand anywhere on the service-side.

A very favourite service is from the left side of the court, and from close to the *dedans*. From this place the ball is struck on to the penthouse, with a very hard underhand or overhand stroke, and rushes along at a great pace; it may reach the back-wall at the "nick," that is to say, just where the



IN POSITION FOR A HIGH SERVICE.



IN POSITION FOR SERVING CLOSE UNDER THE PENTHOUSE.

back-wall meets the floor. Of course, such a service would be almost impossible to return; it is called the *chemin de fer* or railroad service. This variety in the services helps to make tennis the exciting game it is; the lawn-tennis service is, in comparison, most monotonous to watch.

The player on the further side has to return the ball over the net (as in lawn-tennis), but he may hit the ball right into the *dedans* itself (this will always be a winning stroke), or full against the back-wall or the side-wall (up to a certain height). In lawn-tennis such a stroke would go "out of court."

The scoring will be very much the same as in lawn-tennis—for instance, "15—love, 15—all, 30—15, 30—all, 40—30, deuce, vantage, deuce, vantage, game." The "set" is for six games. All this sounds very familiar to lawn-tennis players or spectators, but there are considerable differences in the scoring beyond these mere numbers.

First of all there are those winning strokes of which we have spoken already; many of them would go flying far outside the court at lawn-tennis. Then there are what are called the *chases*; they are the despair of the uninitiated spectators, and cannot be

described in detail here. The principle is that a player may often leave a ball alone and let it fall, without necessarily losing the stroke. He will play again for the stroke, but when he thus plays again for it he will play under unfavourable conditions. He has to go on making better strokes than the one which he left alone. His strokes will all have to be a better "length," or else "cut" so heavily that they will come down smartly when they hit the back-wall.

The lines across the floor on the service-side mark the distance from the back-wall. Supposing that I am playing on this side, and cannot reach a stroke, so that I let the ball strike the floor *twice*, then the marker notes where the ball strikes the floor



Photo by Ludovici.]

[New York.

PETER LATHAM, WORLD-CHAMPION FOR TENNIS AND RACKETS.

at the *second* bounce. If it is two yards from the back-wall, he calls out "Chase 2"; if it is a little more than six yards, he calls out "Worse than 6"; and, if it is still nearer to the net, he may call out "The last gallery," or "The second gallery," etc., according to the spot.

Now, when there are two such chases, or when there is only one, and the game is within one point of being finished, then we change sides, and now I have to play out the two chases or the one chase over again, but this time at a disadvantage; for every stroke I make has now to be a better stroke than the one I left alone. For instance, the playing for the "chase 2" will mean that each of my strokes has to strike the floor, at its second bounce, between "chase 2" and the back-wall—*i.e.*, within two yards of the back-wall. If I fail to hit one ball as close to the back-wall as this, and if my opponent leaves this "failure" alone, then I shall have lost the "chase" and the stroke: the marker will call out "Lost it," and my opponent will get the point.

If I do not think that I can possibly keep the ball within this limit, I may strike for the *dedans*, which is always a winning opening.

If you notice the grip in the illustration on page 604, you will see that the head of the racket is at an angle, and the racket will strike the ball, not fair and square, but with a kind of slicing stroke. An old marker described it as hitting the ball "as if you was trying to kill a dawg." This, which is called the *cut*, is one of the most marked features of tennis; it is also found in rackets, not in the play itself, but in the service.

This cut makes the stroke somewhat slower than the stroke at rackets, and at rackets also one is not allowed to play over again any stroke which one has left alone. There are no "chases." In this, rackets resembles lawn-tennis. In rackets also there is more hard driving. But tennis is acquiring this hard drive more and more.

Of course, fives, though somewhat like tennis in many ways, is different from tennis, lawn-tennis, and rackets, because in it both hands are used, and not a racket at all.

Some of the advantages of tennis as a game may now briefly be mentioned.

For one thing, as the illustration of the game will show, there is an *old-world feeling* about the tennis court. It is like walking in an old-fashioned garden; one feels outside the busy rush of life and business in this "world of sport shut in," and the effect is

refreshing. Perhaps it is partly this, as well as the very great merits of the game, that is making tennis so popular in America.

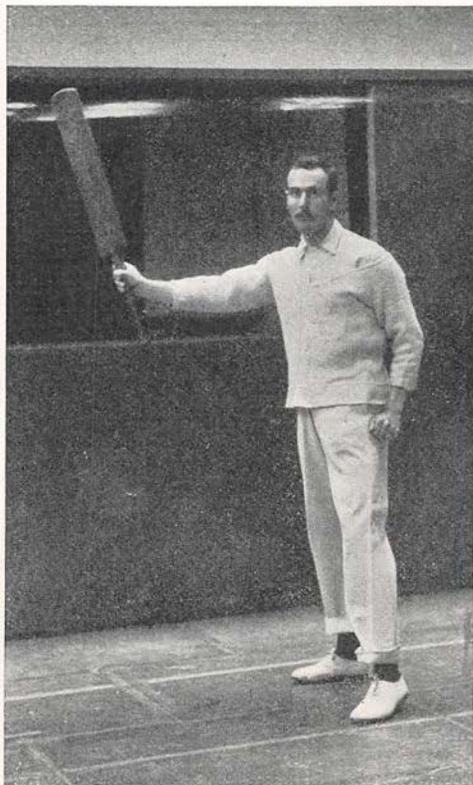
For the game has very great merits; there always seems to be something fresh to learn and to study, and the whole art of tennis is most engrossing. Only the other day an amateur told me that he would be quite content to knock about tennis balls by himself for hours together in a tennis court.

The game is also not too long, though much will depend on one's opponent. Besides this, it can be played up to almost any age, for the gain of experience will almost counteract the loss of activity up to a certain point. The veteran will know just how to play a stroke, just what balls to leave alone, and just what kind of service to give. Jim Harradine, the Cambridge marker, is over fifty years of age, but does not seem yet to have lost any of his activity—he can play for five or six hours a day. Mr. Ross, who writes the excellent accounts of tennis matches for the *Field*, is also no longer young, but there seems no reason why he should not keep up his game at a high level for ever so many years to come.

Tennis, unlike lawn-tennis on the grass, may be played all the year round and in any weather. The tennis marker also makes a great difference. It must not be thought that the marker merely marks; he or his assistants are able to string rackets, and they will play with a player whose opponent has not turned up; they give lessons as well. And this is not all, for they rank among the very highest classes of professionals in England. Some of them are among the pleasantest men one could possibly meet. It is well worth while to talk over the game with many of these markers; their ideas and their varied stock of anecdotes are always worth listening to. Peter Latham is an especially interesting example of the tennis professional, partly, of course, because he is champion of the world both at tennis and at rackets.

Other markers have had their peculiar interests. Of Tom Pettitt we have already spoken; he is one of the most powerfully built men that I have ever seen; he looks as if he could easily take up anybody and throw him anywhere; he, like Peter Latham, is a splendid teacher, and one of the most interesting men to talk to. Another marker whom I knew used to be able to jump on to the penthouse.

It is the handicaps, as well as the markers, that help to make tennis a fascinating



E. H. MILES (AMATEUR CHAMPION AND HOLDER OF THE GOLD PRIZE), IN A HANDICAP WITH A CRICKET BAT INSTEAD OF A RACKET.

game. At lawn-tennis you meet an opponent who can easily beat you, or whom you can easily beat; it will not be an even game, and perhaps you are the better player and you say to him, "How much shall I give you?" He says, "Oh, I would much rather play level." Now, if you play up hard you will win easily; if you do not, the game will hardly be worth the candle, for there are few things more unsatisfactory than a slack game. At tennis, however, there is a certain compulsion brought to bear on the players, for if anyone in a set loses six games running, this is called a love set, and the loser has to pay a shilling to the marker. The man who refused to take odds might, therefore, lose five or six shillings in a day; this will incline him to take odds. No one cares for paying even a shilling, quite apart from the ignominy of the love set; whereas it is not ignominy in tennis to receive proper odds, for it is the regular custom.

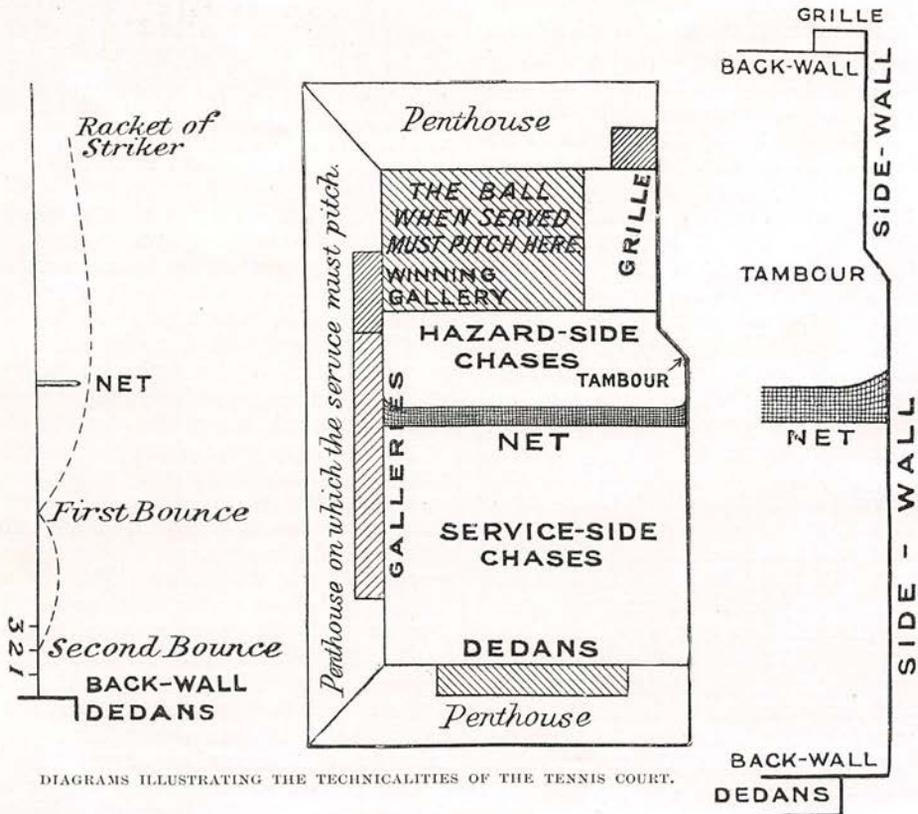
Someone will say that there are but very few courts in England, or perhaps in the world, but England alone possesses over

thirty. In Cambridge there are two, and the others are scattered over England; Scotland and Ireland even have them. Abroad, there are two excellent and well-used courts in Paris, and in and around Paris there used to be many, although few of them are much frequented. There is one at Vienna, and a dear little court at Hobart, in Tasmania, and there is a fine court also in Melbourne. In America—Chicago, Boston, and New York have tennis as well as racket courts, and a lovely new court has been built in the neighbourhood of New York, at Tuxedo Park. The cement work is by Bickley and is excellent. It was in this court that I played an international match with the American amateur champion, Mr. L. Stockton. Mr. George Gould also has a beautiful court at Lakewood. It is rumoured that private courts are likely to be built near New York, and that later on the Universities—*e.g.*, Harvard and Yale—may possibly have tennis courts as well.

The Americans do things which we should not dream of doing. We can hardly imagine

a tennis court, such as we used to see under the clock at Lord's, being transferred to the fourth or fifth storey of a building; and yet America has two courts right up at the top of a building; for land is very expensive, and a tennis court on the ground floor would be too dear a luxury, and, besides, a tennis court could hardly be built with anything above it, because it needs a light from the top; and so the Americans at Boston and New York have their tennis courts on the top floor.

It is a pity that we do not use the roofs of our houses in London for the purpose of healthy exercise. In a subsequent article, on rackets and squash-rackets, I shall show how easily and cheaply squash-racket courts could be built on the tops of large buildings in the middle of London and other cities. Smuts there would be in abundance, but there would also be open air, good exercise, and a healthy form of real pleasure close at hand. And this surely is what our city life and our nation need almost more than anything else.



DIAGRAMS ILLUSTRATING THE TECHNICALITIES OF THE TENNIS COURT.