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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CROQUET: AS PLAYED BY THE NEWPORT CROQUET CLUB ***

CROQUET

AS PLAYED BY

THE NEWPORT CROQUET CLUB

BY

ONE OF THE MEMBERS.



Sic Indus animo debet aliquando dari
Ad cogitandum melior ut redeat tibi.

PHÆD., Lib. iii, Fab. 4.

NEW YORK:

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PREFACE

The increasing popularity of Croquet, and the deficiencies of the existing manuals of the game, have encouraged me to give this little book to the public. The treatise of Captain Mayne Reid, to which the introduction of croquet in this country is mainly due, is deficient in system and arrangement, and affords no intelligible determination to many of the cases I have instanced in illustration of the rules of the game. The manuals published in this country are still more faulty. The rules afford no solution to half of the ambiguous cases that arise in ordinary play; and some are guilty of the strange error of allowing the "Roquet Croquet" to every ball—a liberty totally at variance with the fundamental principles of the game, and which in the hands of strong players would prolong the contest indefinitely, make victory depend upon a single chance hit, and reduce the opportunities for generalship and combination to a minimum. I have dwelt at some length upon the "right of declining," and the "theory of double points;" principles which, though hinted at by Captain Reid, are left rather obscure in his book. Players will find that this power of economizing privileges adds greatly to the interest of the game, and renders many a cunning plot and counter-plot necessary.

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The origin of this game is unknown. No man invented whist or chess, and croquet like them seems to have been evolved by some process of nature, as a crystal forms or a flower grows—perfect, in accordance with eternal laws. There is in all these games a certain theory which furnishes interpretations for all cases that arise in actual play. The rules are grouped about a central principle. The mimic battles have a unity, and are homogeneous in all their parts. If the rules are indefinite or contradictory the game loses its distinctive character. If the rules are accurate and rigidly enforced, croquet is a game of the highest interest. I am informed by a scientific billiard player that though croquet is inferior to billiards in affording opportunities for delicate manipulation and manual dexterity, that it far excels that elegant game in the field it opens for the exercise of the higher qualities of combination and foresight. Whist exercises the memory and the power of calculating probabilities; chess the imagination and the faculty of abstract reasoning; but croquet, though it taxes these mental qualities less, combines them with the delights of out-door exercise and social enjoyment, fresh air and friendship—two things which are of all others most effective in promoting happiness. Those who have been in the habit of regarding croquet as a game for children may, perhaps, smile at my enthusiasm; but let them procure a perfect ground, balls and mallets, play half a dozen four-ball games in strict accordance with the rules, and when they can claim to have mastered the game, they will acknowledge themselves converts.

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I have adopted the plan of giving first definitions, then rules, then cases adjudged under the rules; as the common law consists of the definitions of legal terms, the statement of legal maxims or principles, and the reports of litigated causes. The laws are in substance those adopted by the "Newport Croquet Club," and many of the cases given actually occurred in play, and were settled in full bench after long and animated discussion. I think the laws will not conflict with those of Captain Reid, while I hope that they will be found more full and accurate, and of more exact application. I cannot flatter myself that I have provided for every possible ambiguous case; still, I hope that I have indicated the solution to most of the questions that are likely to arise in the course of a game.

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I shall be very happy to receive suggestions from any lovers of the game who may discover errors or imperfections; for why should not croquet as well as chess have its literature.

"J.",

NEWPORT, R.I., *July 7th, 1865.*

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CHAPTER I

DEFINITIONS

ARENA.—The space included by the boundaries of the croquet ground, within which a ball driven out of it is entitled to be placed.

BLOW.—The stroke of the mallet. A blow opposed to a push.

BOOBY.—A ball that fails to run the first bridge.

BRIDGED BALL.—A ball that has run the first bridge.

CENTRAL BRIDGES.—Those in a line between the stakes.

CHIEFS.—The leaders of the sides, who strike for the first choice.

CONCUSSION.—The displacement of a ball by another ball.

CROQUET.—The title of the game. A privilege gained by making "roquet." It consists in placing the playing ball in contact with the roqueted ball, and on any side of it; holding it there with the foot, and striking it with the mallet, by which means the other is driven in any required direction. [Pg 10]

CROQUETERIE.—The implements of the game—namely, balls, mallets, stakes and bridges.

DEAD BALL.—A rover struck against the starting stake, and thereby struck out of the game.

DOUBLE POINT.—Two points made on the same blow.

ENEMY.—A player on the opposite side.

FLANK BRIDGES.—Those on the right and left of a line between the stakes.

FLINCH.—When in executing the "croquet" the playing ball escapes from under the foot, it is said to "flinch."

FRONT OF A BRIDGE.—That side from which a ball must proceed in running it; the side toward the starting stake for the first half round; the side towards the turning stake for the last half round.

FRIENDS.—Players on the same side.

GRAND ROUND.—The grand round consists in running all the bridges, (the central ones in both directions,) and tolling the turning stake, in proper order; after completing which the ball becomes a rover. [Pg 11]

HALF ROUND.—The first half round includes running the central bridges and those on the left flank, and is to be made before tolling the stake; the second half round includes the central bridges and those on the left flank which are to be run in the reverse order between tolling and striking out.

MISPLAY.—Playing out of proper tour; playing the ball of another player, or continuing the tour after failing to make a point.

OBLIQUE BRIDGE.—A bridge accidentally out of perpendicular, either to the horizon or to the line joining the stakes.

OVERRUNNING A BRIDGE.—A ball overruns its proper bridge when, in attempting to run it, it passes it on one side.

PLACING A BALL.—Bringing it within the arena when driven out of it, or removing a ball from a fixed obstacle.

POINT.—A blow by which a step on the round or a roquet is made, thereby entitling the player to continuance of tour—that is, to another blow.

POSITION.—A ball is in position when it is in front of its proper bridge, with a reasonable probability of running it on the next blow. The position is good or bad according to the ease or difficulty of the run. [Pg 12]

PROPER BRIDGE.—The next "step on the round," the making of which constitutes a point.

PUSH.—Shoving the ball with the mallet, allowed on some croquet-grounds instead of a blow.

RE-ROQUET.—After roqueting a ball to roquet it again during the same tour, a right acquired only by making a step on the round.

RICOCHET.—Two or more roquets made on the same blow.

ROQUET.—The contact of the playing ball with another ball under such circumstances as to constitute a point; that is, provided both balls are bridged balls at the time of contact, and roquet has not been made on the same ball before in the same tour since the right to re-roquet has been acquired.

ROQUET-CROQUET; CROQUET SANS PIED.—The privilege of the rover. It differs from croquet in that the playing ball is not held with the foot, so that when struck it follows the croquetted ball or diverges in another direction.

ROVER.—A ball that has made the grand round, but not struck out.

RUNNING A BRIDGE.—Passing through the proper bridge from the front, or completing such passage, one of the steps on the round, a "point," if made by a blow of the mallet. [Pg 13]

SIDE.—One of the two parties of players, of which the members play alternately.

SPOT.—A point between the starting stake and the first bridge, one mallet's length from the former; from which the play commences.

STARTING STAKE.—That near which the play commences, and the striking of which by a rover puts it out.

STEP ON THE ROUND.—Running the proper bridge, or tolling the stake at the proper time, which advances a ball on the grand round, and gives the right to re-roquet.

STRIKING FOR FIRST CHOICE.—The usual method of deciding the first choice, in making up the sides and the first play. Each chief places a ball under the arch of the first bridge and plays at the stake. The ball lying nearest the stake entitles the chief playing it to the first choice of friends and the option of the first or second play.

STRIKING OUT.—Hitting the starting stake when a rover, putting a ball out, and if the last of the side constituting the victory.

TOLLING THE STAKE.—Hitting the turning stake at the proper time; one of the steps on the grand round. [Pg 14]

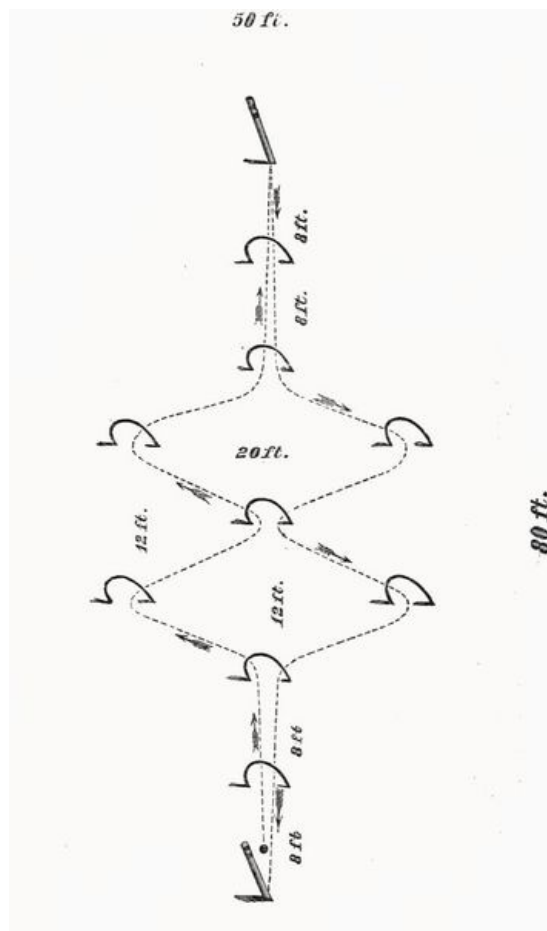
TOUR OF PLAY.—The tour of a player or right to play, following the order of the colors on the stake, and continuing as long as he makes a point.

TURNING STAKE.—The stake to be tolled, opposite to the starting stake. [Pg 15]

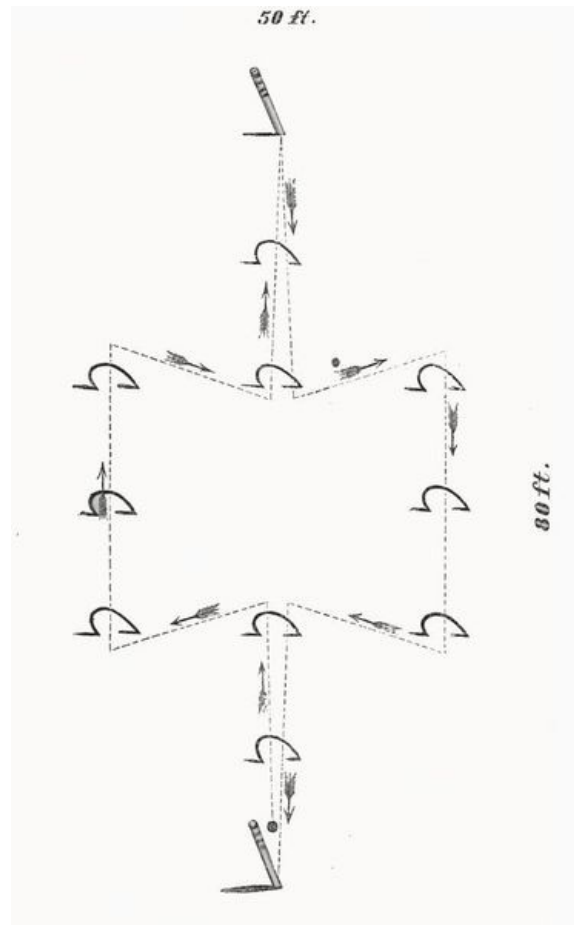
CHAPTER II

THE GROUND AND CROQUETERIE

The most important requisite for a croquet ground is smoothness of surface. Very good sport may be had on a ground slightly inclined; indeed a little practice will enable the players to make allowance for the inclination, so as to play with as much accuracy as if the surface were horizontal. But if the turf presents small inequalities, the direction and force of the stroke can never be accurately estimated. If the stroke is gentle, the ball may fall short or be turned aside. If the stroke is forcible, the ball will bound along the ground, and may jump entirely over another ball which it was intended to roquet. A croquet ground can always be brought to the requisite degree of smoothness by having the surface beaten with a spade after a rain; or, better still, thoroughly rammed with a paver's mallet. Rolling is not so effective, unless the ground is very soft or the roller very heavy. The size and shape of the ground is a matter of much less importance. The boundaries within which a ball can be placed should be traced or agreed upon; still better permanently defined by a ditch or slight embankment; and should, if possible, form a parallelogram of eighty feet by fifty. The turf within them should be kept as short as possible. The best arrangement of bridges for the four-ball game is that given in Figure I. For the six or eight-ball game Figure II. is preferable. A ball meets with two kinds of obstructions in making the "grand round"—it is obliged to pass through all the bridges, and again it may be croquetted and driven out of its course by an enemy. In the six or eight ball game, the dangers being much increased, it is well to diminish the difficulties, or the contest may be tediously protracted. This is accomplished by removing the central bridge and straightening the course. The channel is less tortuous, but "roving" privateers, clothed with "belligerent rights," are more frequently met, and the risks and excitement of the passage are equalized in both cases. [Pg 16]



NO. I. FOUR BALL ARRANGEMENT.



NO. II. EIGHT BALL ARRANGEMENT.

In the diagrams the dotted lines indicate the order in which the bridges are to be run, and show the course of a ball making the "grand round." [Pg 19]

The balls should be perfect spheres, about three inches in diameter, the size depending upon the weight of the wood from which they are made. Maple or beech is a very good material, but the best are made from the buttonwood or American sycamore. They should be boiled in linseed oil to give them the requisite weight and firmness. If boiled too long, however, they will become too

heavy. Six ounces is about the proper weight, and a light ball is infinitely preferable to a heavy one for accurate play at long distances. Eight balls constitute a full set. They must be painted different colors, as the individuality of each ball is an important element in the game. As there is no necessity for the exercise of great strength in croquet, a set of balls made from seasoned wood and prepared as I have described ought to last a generation.

A variety of mallets should be provided, as different players prefer different sizes. One of the surest hitters I have ever known uses a mallet about fourteen inches long with a heavy head. The wood of the apple tree is the best material for the heads, and straight-grained ash for the handles. The standard handle is thirty-two inches long, one inch in diameter at the upper end, and five-eighths of an inch at the lower, tapering gradually. The head should be a cylinder about two inches in diameter and four inches long. It is best to make the faces square; for if they are convex, it renders it necessary to strike the ball exactly with the centre of the mallet head to insure an accurate stroke.

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The stakes should be about two feet long, and one and one-half inches in diameter. At least one of them should have rings painted on it corresponding to the colors of the balls. This is merely to aid in recollecting the order of play.

Nine bridges are required in the four-ball arrangement, ten in the other. Firkin hoops, or hickory withs, about as large as the ramrod of a rifle, will answer the purpose very well. If soaked a day or two they can easily be bent into the required shape. The best, however, are made of three-eighths round iron. The span of the bridges should be rather less than three times the diameter of a ball. Eight inches is enough. If the ground is small so as to necessitate placing the bridges closer than in the standard arrangement, the span should be narrowed, and "vice versa," on the principle that too much difficulty protracts the game, too little renders it devoid of interest. The height and form of the arch is immaterial, but the pier or side of the bridge should be straight for at least three inches from the ground, and the centre of the arch from seven to nine inches high. The bridges should be driven firmly into the ground, in a plane perpendicular to the horizon and to the line joining the stakes. An inspection of the diagrams will furnish all needful information as to position.

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CHAPTER III

MANNER OF PLAYING THE GAME

The game of croquet may be played by any number of players up to eight. If eight enter the game, each player must be provided with a mallet, and each will play one ball. If a less number of persons play, eight balls may still be used, one or more of the players playing two balls. In all cases there should be two sides, or parties, each of course having the same number of balls; and the balls, whether played by the same or different persons, having their turns always in the same prescribed order. An eight-ball or even a six-ball game is apt to be tedious, and skilful players invariably give the preference to the four-ball game, which may therefore be considered croquet *par eminence*. With more than four balls the element of chance enters too largely, and the combinations become too intricate, to be foreseen with any degree of certainty. The true lover of croquet will no more be tempted into an eight-ball game than a scientific chess-player will indulge in that abnormal monstrosity "four-handed chess." Played with two balls only, the game degenerates into a mere race. The four-ball game with two players is preferred by many, though lacking the sociality which is one of the charms of croquet. As the rules are the same in all cases, I shall hereafter, for convenience of illustration, take it for granted that there are four balls and four players. If the sides are not otherwise made up, two of the players are selected as chiefs. They strike for the first choice, (see definition); the one who wins it chooses a friend, then the other, and so on till the sides are made up. The winning chief plays first if he chooses, or, if not, the other chief leads, and the winning chief plays second; then one of the friends of the first player, and so on, the members of the two sides playing alternately. The first player uses the ball the color of which is highest on the stake, and the next takes the color immediately below. It is usual to have the rings on the stake alternately some light and dark color, so that the light colors form one side and the dark the other. After leading, the function of the chief ceases, except in match games, when he is allowed to direct the play of his side. At the commencement of the game the first player places his ball upon the spot, and strikes it with his mallet in the direction of the first bridge. If it run the bridge—that is, pass completely through it, he has the right to another blow; if not it is called a booby, and he must wait till the others have played and his turn comes round again. Suppose, however, that he has run the first bridge, and on his second blow runs the second bridge, he thus takes another step on the "grand round," or makes another point, which entitles him to still another blow. As it is generally impossible to run the third bridge on the third blow, he now tries to get "position" for his ball in front of the third bridge; but as he does not make a point on this last blow, he is not entitled to continuance of tour. He therefore stops, and the first player of the other side begins by placing his ball upon the spot and attempting to run the first bridge. If he runs it he has a little more latitude in his play, for he may now make a point in two ways—either by hitting the other ball, provided it is not a booby, or running his next bridge. Suppose he chooses to play for the second bridge, and, having run it, plays at the other ball already in position for the third bridge. If he succeeds in hitting it, he is

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said to have roqueted it, and having thus made a point, may play again and attempt the third bridge. But he has still another privilege; he may take his ball up, place it by the side of the other ball, and croquet it; after which he proceeds to play his ball from the position in which he placed it, having retained it there by his foot during the croquet. He will probably be in position for the third bridge. If he runs it his tour still continues, and he may play for the next bridge, or roquet the other ball again, which he may previously have croqueted, into the proper position. His tour continues till he fails to make a point, when the next player on the other side begins. After running the first bridge, he acquires, of course, the right of roqueting the other two balls. If he roquets an enemy's ball, he croquets it, if he wishes, into a disadvantageous position. If he roquets a friend, he croquets his ball into better position, or perhaps through its proper bridge. This will constitute a step on the grand round for the friend's ball, and will advance it as much as if it were driven through the bridge by the mallet of its proper player. After roqueting a ball, however, a player cannot roquet the same ball again until his own ball has made a step on the grand round. He may drive his own ball against it, and perhaps displace it by the concussion; but the hit does not constitute a roquet, does not entitle to croquet, or to continuance of tour. After making a step on the grand round, however, all his privileges are revived. After all the players have had their tours in the order of the colors on the stake, the first player takes his second tour, and so on. At the beginning of each new tour the grand round is taken up again, and the ball may make a point by making the "proper step on the round"—that is, the one next in order to that last made—whether made by a stroke of the mallet, by "concussion," or by croquet. Or it may make a point by roqueting any of the other balls. In the last case it may play again, either from the spot to which it has rolled or from the side of the roqueted ball; or it may croquet it and then play, attempting the proper step on the round, or roqueting another ball. If it has roqueted all the balls, it can make a point only by running its bridge, or tolling the stake, whichever may be the proper step; after which, as said before, all its privileges are renewed.

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Thus the game continues until one of the balls completes the grand round, as explained in the diagrams. The last step is running the first bridge in the reverse direction. The player making this takes up his ball, unless he has been so unfortunate as to strike out on the same blow; and places it on the spot whence he continues his tour as a rover, namely, that of croqueting without the foot, or roquet-croqueting after making a roquet. By this means he not only drives off the roqueted ball but follows it with his own, or forces them in divergent directions. If he is skillful, he may leave his own ball near one of the other balls, which he may then proceed to roquet, and succeeding in this, to croquet, or to roquet-croquet, whichever may be most advantageous. As he has no bridges to run he can never re-roquet, and hence after he has roqueted and croqueted all the other balls his tour terminates at the next blow.

As soon as a rover touches the starting stake it becomes a dead ball and must be removed from the field. It makes no difference whether it strike out by its own act, or is struck out by its partner, or by one of the enemy. The latter catastrophe will be of frequent occurrence unless perpetually guarded against, for the partner or partners are thereby left to fight against superior numbers. When all the balls of a side succeed in striking the stake the game is over, and the side has won the victory.

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With this brief outline of the game, the reader is referred for details to the chapter on the rules.

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CHAPTER IV

THE RULES

1. *Each ball must first be placed upon the spot and played from thence.*

A booby does not return to the spot, but continues to play as a booby, without the right to roquet or be roqueted until it is bridged. Hence a booby has but one blow unless that blow bridge it. It may hit another ball and be hit, but the contact never constitutes a point.

2. *The mallet must be used with one hand, and the stroke must be a blow.*

With balls and mallets of the standard size, there is no necessity for using both hands. It is difficult to draw the precise line between a legitimate blow and a push. In every blow the mallet follows the ball a little, for it takes a small interval of time for the momentum of the mallet to transfer itself to the ball; but in the push a new impulse is given to the ball every instant, and this may act unfairly; for instance, a ball is to be roqueted at a distance of six inches or a foot. If the playing ball is pushed until it reach the other ball, the latter is virtually moved by the mallet as much as in the roquet-croquet, instead of being moved by concussion merely. This would be inconsistent with the theory of the game. Again, a ball is in contact with the pier of its proper bridge so that it cannot run it by a blow. If a push be allowed, it might be pushed into position, and then pushed through by slightly changing the direction of the mallet. It would thus be played in a curved line. It may be objected to this rule that the vicinity of the stake or the piers of a bridge may render a blow impossible; but a little attention will obviate the necessity of playing in constrained positions.

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3. *The stroke is delivered when an audible sound is made or the ball moved.*

The habit of giving the ball a little preparatory tap should be avoided. It is allowed to strike the pier of a bridge or the stake with the view of moving the ball by concussion; but if the ball do not move the blow is complete, and the error in judgment cannot be rectified.

4. *The tour of a ball continues as long as it makes a point, and terminates with the first blow on which no point is made.*

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5. *To make a point a ball must either make a step on the grand round or roquet another ball.*

Croquet is not considered a point, because it is not a play of the player's own ball but a privilege, after which the tour is continued by virtue of the roquet.

6. *Each ball before striking out must make every step on the grand round in the prescribed order, either directly by a blow of the mallet, or indirectly by concussion or croquet.*

"Directly by a blow of the mallet"—that is, during the ball's own tour, whether proceeding from the mallet immediately, or by rebound from a fixed object or the person of an enemy. "Indirectly," not during its own tour, when moved by another ball or accidentally.

7. *Making the proper step on the round, but no other, constitutes a point, or entitles to continuance of tour.*

A step made indirectly is no point either for the playing ball or the other, though the latter is advanced on its round.

8. *The bridges must be run from the front—that is, from the side towards the starting stake for the first half-round, and from the other side for the second half-round.*

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9. *A bridge is not run unless the ball pass completely through it.*

To decide this in a doubtful case, place the mallet handle against the piers in front; if any part of the ball project beyond the plane of the bridge it will become evident. The ball is then said to rest under the arch of the bridge.

10. *A ball resting under the arch of a bridge and having come from the front makes no point, but is in position to run the bridge.*

The run may now be completed by concussion, or, if the ball remain till next tour, by a blow of the mallet.

11. *A ball resting under the arch of a bridge, and having come from the reverse side, is not in position to run it.*

To decide a doubtful case, place the mallet handle against the piers on the reverse side.

CASE.—A ball was in position under the arch of a bridge but is driven back, and afterwards gains the same position from the reverse side. Is it in position, since it once reached that point from the front? No. The run of the bridge must be continuous, though not necessarily at one blow.

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12. *If a ball pass completely through a bridge and rebound or roll back, the run remains good.*

13. *If a ball pass completely through a bridge in the reverse direction, and rebound or roll back under the arch, it is in position.*

14. *If a bridge be oblique any player may adjust it, unless a ball be under the arch.*

That is, it must first be decided whether the ball has run the bridge or is in position.

15. *The stake may be tolled from any direction and by the slightest perceptible touch.*

An audible sound will be evidence of the tolling; but when it is so near that the sound cannot be distinguished from that of the mallet, it must be seen to change its direction.

16. *A ball roquets another when it comes in contact with it from a blow of the mallet; provided both balls are bridged at the time of contact, and the playing ball has not roqueted the other ball before during the same tour since making a step on the round.*

CASE.—A booby hits a booby and both pass through the first bridge; can it croquet? No. It is not a roquet unless they remain in contact after passing through the bridge. It must roquet again.

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17. *A ball already in contact with another ball does not roquet unless it move it perceptibly.*

To do this it must, of course, play in a direction less than ninety degrees from a line joining the centres of the balls.

18. *A ball can acquire the right to re-roquet—that is, to roquet the same ball again during the same tour—only by making a step on the round.*

A ball may hit another ball twice or more during the same tour, and between two consecutive bridges, or between the bridge and the turning stake, and move it, each time by concussion; but only one (not necessarily the first) contact is a valid roquet.

19. *A roquet, but no hit which does not fulfil all the conditions of a roquet, constitutes a point, and entitles to continuance of tour.*

20. *A roquet, but no other hit, entitles to the privileges of croquet.*

21. *The croquet may be declined, and the tour continued from the spot to which the player's ball has rolled, or from the side of the roqueted ball.*

The privilege of the croquet thus consists of two parts. First, the option between the final position of the playing ball and a new position in contact with the roqueted ball, and on any side of it. Second, the croquet proper. The second only, or both parts of this privilege may be declined; but this must be distinguished from "declining roquet" afterward mentioned.

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CASE.—A ball not a rover having roqueted another ball, is placed in contact with it, and, without using the foot, the player drives them both in any direction, as in roquet-croquet. Is this allowed? Yes. The croquet was declined and the stroke was a common blow; but the other ball, being merely moved by concussion, (since it was previously roqueted,) the tour cannot be continued unless a point was made at the same time.

22. *If after a roquet the playing ball be taken up or moved from its place, it must continue its tour from the side of the roqueted ball.*

CASE.—A ball roquets another ball, driving the latter by concussion through the playing ball's proper bridge; remaining, however, in position to run the bridge. The player begins to move the ball, but on second thought concludes to run the bridge. Can he claim to have moved it by accident? No, even if it was not taken up from the ground; for it may be presumed that it was done with the intention to croquet. Whether he croquet or not he must take position by the side of the other, and has lost his opportunity to run the bridge. So, too, if he takes position under the arch of the bridge he is not in position to run it, for the space over which the ball is carried is no part of its course.

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23. *The croquet must be executed before continuance of tour.*

CASE.—A ball roquets another and on the same blow runs its bridge; the croquet is then executed. Does the run hold good. Yes, at the player's option. CASE.—Under the same circumstances the playing ball is taken to the side of the roqueted ball. Can it re-roquet it on the ground that it has run a bridge since the roquet? No. The right to re-roquet must be acquired *after* croqueting or moving the playing ball. But the playing ball might have re-roqueted from its final position, declining the first croquet.

24. *The croquet is completed when the mallet makes a perceptible blow against the croqueting ball; but if the mallet altogether miss it, the blow may be repeated.*

The blow is perceptible if an audible sound is made, whether the croqueted ball move or not.

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CASE.—A player in croqueting claims to have hit his foot; the croqueted ball, however, has moved from its place. Can he restore it and repeat the blow? No. The claim should not be allowed, for it is impossible to tell in such cases whether the ball was hit or only the foot. If it be necessary to get the other ball out of the way, he must drive it by concussion with his own.

25. *If the player's ball flinch in executing the croquet he forfeits the remainder of his tour, and no point made by a flinching ball is valid.*

CASE.—A flinching ball rests under the arch of its proper bridge, having come from the front. Is it in position? No. If the complete run is illegal, the partial run is also, as in the case of moving a ball to croquet.

26. *If a ball be driven out of the arena, it must be brought within it, and placed one foot from the boundary at the nearest point.*

This rule is on the supposition that the arena is of the standard dimensions or something near it. If from the imperfections of the ground the boundaries at any place approach too near the stakes or bridges, this rule must be modified so that a ball shall not materially alter its position with reference to the bridges, stakes, or other balls. Under the same limitations it may be removed one foot from a tree or other obstacle. The ball should be placed immediately.

[Pg 38]

CASE.—A's ball is played against a tree. If B roquet it he cannot croquet it, or play his ball afterwards to advantage. Can he compel A to place his ball? Yes; but not so that B's position after the roquet shall be improved. If this were not so ruled, an obstacle would often be made a refuge. Cases of this kind often arise on imperfect grounds. They must be settled like cases in equity; as fairly as possible for each side, and so that neither can take advantage of technicalities.

27. *If a player misplay, and the enemy challenge him before allowing the play of another ball, they have the option of replacing the misplaying ball and any which may have been moved in their former positions, or allowing any or all of them to remain in the positions to which they have rolled. And no point made by a misplaying ball, if properly challenged, is valid, except at their option.*

The option belongs to the enemy of the players and not of the ball. If the challenge be made as soon as possible, though another ball is played at the same time, the requirements of the rule are satisfied.

[Pg 39]

CASE.—A misplaying ball runs a bridge after croqueting its partner through his proper bridge. The enemy challenge and elect to leave both balls in their final position. Can they compel them to

renew their bridges? The ball of the misplayer must re-run its bridge; but any other ball has made the step unless it is restored to its former position. The latter is regarded as accidentally displaced, and follows the rule provided for that case. If the misplay consist of illegal continuance of tour, of course the penalty does not extend to the correct play which preceded it.

28. If a player misplay, whether with his own or another ball, he forfeits his next tour.

When a misplay is detected the play is stopped, and the damages under the preceding rules taken, and the player who should have played takes his tour, and so on, omitting the misplayer's next tour. Thus if A play in his partner C's tour, the order will be C, D, B, C, etc. If A play without right to continuance of tour, the order will be B, C, D, B, C, etc.

29. If a misplay is not challenged until the play of another ball has commenced, the play stands, but the misplayer loses his first tour after the discovery.

[Pg 40]

CASE.—D plays after A and is challenged, but shows that A misplayed in his partner's tour. Has D misplayed? No. He played in his proper tour. C has lost his tour through neglect, and A has anticipated a tour, while the other side has lost the right to exact the penalty for A's misplay, the order of play is B, A, D, B, C, etc.

CASE.—While B is playing it is discovered that A misplayed. Is B's play correct? Yes. B naturally plays after A. B finishes his play, and the order of play is B, A, B, C, D, B, etc. Here A's tour is merely transposed, and B gains an extra tour, so that in both cases the misplaying side loses one tour. If a player misplays in the tour of an enemy and is not challenged in time, the misplayer and the neglectful party will each lose a tour. Thus if D omit his tour the order will be C, A, B, C, D, B, etc. If A play without right to continuance of tour, so as in effect to take two tours, and it is discovered after B begins to play, A merely anticipates his next turn, and the order is A, A, B, C, D, B, etc.

[Pg 41]

30. If a misplay has taken place so that the balls are playing in a wrong order, but the original misplayer cannot be discovered, the playing ball must finish its tour and the right order be taken up.

A case of frequent occurrence in the four-ball game. The sides are still playing alternately, but in an inverted order, A, D, C, B. A misplay has evidently been made, but none of the subsequent players can be convicted, because each has followed his partner after the proper interval; hence no penalty can be exacted on either side. If two partners are playing in succession, the last always misplays; and, if detected before the next play, must suffer the full penalty, and any previous player in the same circumstances loses his next turn.

31. If a ball be played before the preceding ball has finished or abandoned its tour, the enemy have the option of replacing the ball to take its tour after the other has finished, or letting the play stand as the player's next tour.

This case is excluded from the definition of misplay, and the penalty exacted is less. As will be seen by the next rule, the ball prematurely played will have had but one blow. If it was a good one the enemy will have the ball replaced; if a poor one they will let it stand; and if an easy point has been made, the player loses the rest of his tour, as in misplay, except that if a step on the round is made it is valid.

[Pg 42]

32. A player abandons his tour if he allows the next player to make two blows before challenging him, or make use of words or actions implying that he has finished his tour.

As calling the name of a player or color of the ball. Of course it is implied that a tour abandoned cannot be resumed.

CASE.—A seems to abandon his tour, B begins to play, and C reminds A of his right to continuance of tour. Has A abandoned his tour? Yes, if he had not intended to play until he was reminded, or acted so as to convey such an impression.

33. A ball accidentally displaced may be replaced, or allowed to remain, at the option of the enemy of the player who caused the accident.

A ball moved under the foot in croqueting, but not flinching, is accidentally displaced.

34. If a ball accidentally displaced make a step on the round, the step is valid unless the ball be replaced.

In the same case the position is good if it pass under the arch of a bridge from the front.

[Pg 43]

35. If a ball in motion be interrupted by one of the players, it may rest at the point of interruption, or be carried to the most distant part of the arena in the direction in which it was moving, at the option of the enemy of the player causing the interruption.

If a croqueted ball is interrupted, the croquet may be repeated.

36. A player may decline any point made by himself, and play precisely as if the point had not been made.

Of course if no other point is made on the same blow the tour is finished. The application of the principle is connected with double points. If a single roquet is declined, the effect is the same as if the croquet and continuance of tour were declined; but if a step on the round is declined, it

remains the proper step and must be made again, and the tour ceases. If the player wishes to adopt this course he must signify that he declines the run or toll, or he will be presumed to have declined continuance of tour merely. Striking out is not a point, and of course cannot be declined.

CASE.—A ball passes through its bridge and recoils under the arch. Can the player decline the run, leaving the ball in position? No. If it ran the bridge, it passes under the arch in the wrong direction in recoiling. So also if the bridge declined is the second of two consecutive ones run, or a single blow—a case more likely to occur, as continuance of tour is then retained by virtue of the first run.

[Pg 44]

37. If a player decline one of two points made on the same blow, he may continue his tour by virtue of the other.

He should signify which one he intends to decline; and unless he does so, either by words or by the course of play, he may be presumed not to have declined either.

38. A step on the round made and declined must be made again, and when made constitutes a point.

For instance, a ball makes roquet upon another ball, and accidentally glances through its own bridge. If it should be in position after croqueting, it may prefer to decline the run and make it again. It must be remembered that it is not in position if placed under the arch to croquet, and that the roquet must have been legitimate at the time of contact, otherwise the run is the only point made, for the right to re-roquet cannot be antedated.

CASE.—A ball makes roquet and runs a bridge at the same shot. After croqueting, he attempts to run the bridge and fails. Can he adopt the previous run? No. The attempt to run the bridge shows that he elected to decline the bridge. If he wishes to play in the direction of the bridge without declining he should signify his election, and then an accidental run will not constitute a point. If he plays in another direction, the bridge is not declined unless he so signify. He has the option at the time, but must make his choice at once; and if he says nothing before he plays, he is committed to that alternative which his play seems naturally to indicate.

[Pg 45]

39. A step on the round made by a ball through concussion, croquet, or roquet-croquet from another ball, cannot be declined, and the next step becomes proper.

40. A step on the round made by flinch, accident, or misplay, is valid or not at the option of the enemy of the party in fault, who must make their decision at once.

In case of accident or displace through a misplaying ball, it depends upon whether the ball is left or replaced. In case of the misplayer's ball, or a flinching ball, the option is with the enemy. In the cases of Rule 39 there is no option, and in Rule 36 it rests with the player himself.

[Pg 46]

41. If a ball makes two successive steps on the round with one blow of the mallet, and does not decline the latter, it may take ground up to a standard mallet's length before continuing its tour.

The first step cannot be declined from the nature of the case; the second may, but then there is no ground for the premium. The second point will be declined if it is possible to make very good position for the second bridge by roquet, or to glance off from the stake to advantage. If the mallet's length allows a ball to take ground on the reverse side of its proper bridge this will not count as a run, nor will the ball be in position if placed under the arch. Up to a mallet's length of course includes everything less.

42. A step on the round is not declined if it be made the ground for continuance of tour, re-roquet, or taking ground under the last two rules, and in such case it cannot be made again.

CASE.—A having already roqueted B's ball, can he decline the run? If he does the hit is no roquet, and no point has been made.

CASE.—A runs a bridge and roquets a ball. The two balls rest in such relative positions that A can roquet the same ball back through the bridge. Can he, after doing this, re-run the bridge? Not on that tour; for if he continues his tour, the second hit must have been a roquet; the roquet on the first blow must have been declined; therefore the bridge could not have been declined. Or, if the bridge was declined, the first hit was a roquet and the second no point; therefore his tour is at an end.

[Pg 47]

43. A roquet made and declined may be made again during the same tour, although the right to re-roquet has not been acquired, and when so made it constitutes a point.

The first hit was not a roquet if really declined. (See Rule 45.) A ball may be hit and moved by concussion before a roquet as well as after one. Thus if a step on the round and a roquet be made on the same blow, the player may at once croquet the roqueted ball, or roquet it again immediately or after other roquets. Not croqueting the ball is evidence enough of having declined, as there could never be any advantage in declining the croquet and not the roquet, if it can properly be declined.

44. A ball making ricochet—that is, roqueting several balls on the same blow—may croquet them all in the order of the roquets.

[Pg 48]

Any one of the roquets may be declined and made again after croqueting the other balls in their proper order. Not croqueting is sufficient evidence of declining; but if none are croqueted, and

the ball is not moved to the side of any one, the player must declare which he means to decline. As soon as a step on the round is made, it no longer makes any difference whether a roquet was declined or not.

CASE.—A ball makes roquet on two balls simultaneously. Can it croquet them both? Yes, and the player should have the option of either order.

45. *A roquet is not declined if it is made the ground for continuance of tour, croquet, or playing from the side of the roqueted ball; and in such case the same ball cannot be roqueted again during the same tour until the right to re-roquet has been acquired.*

46. *A ball running the last bridge by a direct blow of the mallet must be carried to the spot and played from thence as a rover, unless it strike out on the same blow.*

The ball in this last case passes over the spot, and thus of itself complies with the condition and becomes a rover, after which it may strike out. Hence, also, if it does strike out, the bridge cannot be declined so as to save the ball. [Pg 49]

CASE.—A ball runs the last bridge and roquets a ball on the same blow. Can it croquet? Not unless the bridge is declined, otherwise it must be placed on the spot immediately.

47. *A ball running the last bridge otherwise than by a direct blow of the mallet becomes a rover, but must be played from its final position like any other ball.*

48. *A rover having no bridges to run can never re-roquet.*

A rover can make no more points than the number of balls in the game, and can have but one more blow.

49. *A rover, but no other ball, may roquet-croquet a roqueted ball instead of croqueting it.*

If the player, however, elect to use the foot, and his ball flinch, he must suffer the penalty. If in flinching the rover strike the starting stake, he is out if the enemy so decide.

50. *If a rover in roquet-croqueting hit another ball, it may accept or decline the roquet.*

It is entitled to another blow after roquet-croquet at any rate; therefore the roquet is not necessary to give continuance of tour. [Pg 50]

51. *A rover fails to roquet-croquet if the other ball is not moved, and the tour terminates unless another ball is roqueted on the same blow.*

The blow not being a roquet-croquet, a point must be made to entitle to continuance of tour. A roquet-croquet is precisely like a roquet when the balls are in contact. (See Rule 17 and remarks.)

52. *A rover is struck out whenever it touches the starting stake, except when in case of accident or misplay the enemy of the party in fault decide otherwise.* [Pg 51]

CHAPTER V

HINTS TO BEGINNERS

1. Leave your ball as far from your enemy and as near your friend as possible.

2. If you are in advance, help your friend; if you are behind, call upon him to help you.

3. Recollect that position directly under the arch of your proper bridge enables you to command all the field in front of it. You can run the bridge and leave your own ball near any other you wish to croquet, as the run gives you another shot. It is many times advantageous to decline making any stroke from such position, and wait until you see an opportunity to do execution among the enemy.

4. Take pains and exercise judgment on every stroke.

5. If you are a rover, leave yourself close to your friend. He can then croquet you towards the enemy who played last, whom you can afterwards demolish with impunity. [Pg 52]

6. Play strictly according to rule; apply the laws rigidly, but be liberal in settling disputed questions of fact.

7. Do not attempt difficult shots except in desperate circumstances.

8. If the enemy have a rover, make every effort to put it out. One of you can then watch the remaining enemy while the other finishes the round. Your partner then relieves the guard while you make your bridges. The most desperate games can often be thus redeemed.

9. Never despair because you are behind. The game is never out till it is played out. [Pg 53]

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