

SPORTS AND GAMES

By ROBERT BONE

CURLING

This game has been very popular in Scotland for the last three centuries at least, and, for that reason, it is looked upon as a distinctly Scottish game, although it is not known definitely where the game originated. Some writers trace, through the name and technical terms of the game, its invention to Holland, and still others think that possibly the Flemish merchants who settled in Scotland towards the end of the sixteenth century, may have brought the game to the country. However, no mention is made of it in the literature of the continent, while we are informed that one writer, when describing the Orkeney Islands in 1607, tells us that one of these islands supplies "plenty of excellent stones for the game called curling." If the game does not owe its origin to Scotland, it certainly owes its development to that land, with the result that it is now a national sport.

On 15th November, 1838, the "Grand Caledonian Curling Club" came into existence, which under its present title of "The Royal Caledonian Curling Club" is regarded everywhere as the parent-club and legislative body, even in Canada today. It was under the sponsoring of the Royal Caledonian Club that Scottish Curlers visited Canada and the United States in the Winter 1902-3, and this visit did much to bring together the lovers of the game on both sides of the Atlantic. It might be interesting to acquaint you with the incident which gave rise to the assumption of the title "Royal" instead of the original one "Grand." Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort were visiting Scotland in 1842, on which occasion they were initiated into the game on the polished floor of the drawing room in the Palace of Scone, and the Prince Consort, who was presented with a pair of curling stones, consented to become Patron of the Club. The annual match between clubs north of the Forth and those South of it, is under the direction of the "Royal Caledonian Curling Club." In the first of these matches, played in 1847, only twelve rinks were played, in 1903 there were no fewer than 286. Curlers claim to be a united brotherhood within which nobleman and peasant are equal on the ice. A formal freemasonry exists among curlers, and it is well for one who aspires to become a devotee of the game, to be well versed in the mysteries, password, etc. as he may at any moment be examined in these essentials and fined for lapse of memory.

The sight at a Curling match is a familiar one. Every player carries a broom to keep the ice swept, and one's ears will soon get attuned to the old familiar cry "Scoop her up" which means that the player sweeps the ice in front of a running stone to increase the run. Curling is akin to bowls, played on the ice, and, like the latter, it has its skip or captain, whose every word is law in the way of the conduct of the game. The curler aims his stone at a fixed mark which is called the tee, and every stone that finishes nearer than any of the opposing stones, counts a point or shot. As each side has four players each playing two stones, it is possible for one side to score eight points at a head. When all sixteen stones have been played, the players cross over, the scores are counted and the game proceeds from the other end of the rink, which means the space in which the game is played. All matches are for a certain number of heads or of points, or for all that can be made within a certain time limit, as may be agreed.

On good ice, he would not be human who did not get enthused with the excitement attaching to a rink at the "roaring game," as it is affectionately called by its devotees.

FOOTBALL—"ASSOCIATION."

At first mention, one would say that this game originated in Scotland, but, from enquiries, one finds it hard to determine whether it was first played in England or in Scotland. Aside from that question, however, it is impossible to say when the game was first played, although in one form or another, it has existed for very many centuries, in spite of opposition that would have completely extinguished a less attractive form of exercise. The Greeks and the Romans played a game akin to football, the only difference being that they struck the ball with their hands.

Probably no game has ever been able to count upon so much popularity as this one. No trace of the game as at present played, has been discovered beyond the limits of Britain, where it has flourished for centuries. In the fourteenth century, attempts were made to legislate against football, owing to its being played with a boisterous vigour that very closely resembled brutality. During the next few centuries, it began to wane in popularity, but it came to life again with renewed vigour and enthusiasm in the 19th century, since when it may be considered one of the national games of Scotland. Some people look upon this game as rather rough, pointing out that it is associated with a large number of accidents. It certainly cannot be argued that the large majority of mishaps on the field occur through non-observance of the rules, which have been drawn up by the recognized governing bodies to eliminate the rough element. As proof of the popularity of football, one may mention that it is no uncommon event nowadays to have over 100,000 people view a game in the Old Country between first-class teams. The annual international game between England and Scotland usually records a attendance of 100,000 or over. In fact within the last fifteen years at one of these games, the attendance bordered on 130,000 people.

Nearly everyone, in his youth, has played this game, but, as the playing of it makes a big demand upon the nervous system through the very vigour required to do one's part, it is a game in which one cannot actively participate after the age of 30 or thereabouts. It, of course, holds much attraction for its devotees after that age, in that a great deal of pleasure is experienced in watching a good game of football.

GOLF

This game has from old times been known in Scotland as "The Royal and Ancient Game of Golf." Though no doubt Scottish monarchs handled the club before him, James IV is the first who figures formally in the records of the game. James V was also very partial to the game, and it has been said that there is some evidence that his daughter Mary Queen of Scots was a golfer. Her son, James VI,—afterwards James I of England—was a golfer, according to tradition, and as evidence of the interest he took in the game, we find in history an enactment of his which prohibited the importation of golf balls from Holland, except under certain restrictions. Holland is supposed by some writers to have been the country from which the game of golf was imported, and this claim is based upon the derivation of the word—some maintain that the name golf is derived from the Dutch *Holf*, a club—and upon pictures showing Dutchmen participating in the game. There is, however, this peculiarity in these pictures, they portray the game as played upon ice, the putting being at a stake. It is scarcely to be doubted that the game is of Dutch origin, and that it has been in favor since very early