

IMPARTIAL NATURE.

IMPARTIAL Nature, thou alone
No favourites hast; thou lovest all.
No child of thine wilt thou disown,
Or list unanswering to his call.

Thy sun shines for the bond and free,
And high and low by thee are fed,
Covers thy blue earth's family,
And under all thy green is spread.

For all thy music flows, thy streams
Run from their sources to the sea,
Thy rocks lay bare their golden seams,
Ripens thy fruit on shrub and tree.

Race after race from thy broad breast
The milk of life and strength has drawn;
We by that mother-heart are blessed
Which blessed the ages that are gone.

The sun that Homer saw, the moon
Round which the huntsman's fancies played,
The pilot stars to which at noon
Of night the trembling seamen prayed,—

They shine on us. Men come and go,
And nations rise and fall, and still
Nature herself no change doth know;
Her pulses with the old life thrill.

And Scot and Briton to her heart
Are dear as Greek and Hebrew were;
And none from all can she dispart
Ever, for all were born of her.

Benton, N. B.

MATTHEW RICHEY KNIGHT.

THE GAME OF LAWN BOWLS.

THE game which it is intended by this article to describe is not the sort of bowling usually referred to in the sporting columns of American papers and magazines. A covered bowling alley with wooden floor and nine pins or ten pins therein, to be knocked down by balls as big as a sixty-eight-pound shot, is one thing; a bowling green in the open, with close-clipped, level grass, biassed wooden bowls and a little movable object ball or "jack," is quite another.

Both are good in their way. The first is the more violent, more conducive to development of muscle in the player, and warranted to induce perspiration. As a means of active exercise, and for such a purpose as the reducing of flesh, it is commendable. But it lacks variety; the pins are always placed in the same spot and the object of the game is always the same. Lawn bowls is a gentler game, played altogether out of doors, on different parts of a meadow or lawn, under varying circumstances as to distance and position.

The balls are rolled along the green, swift or slow, wide or narrow, for attack or defense, as the case may be. And the game partakes of the character of both billiards and curling, while being in a sense gentler than either, as well as enjoyable under outdoor conditions impossible to the other games mentioned.

One of the great charms about curling certainly is its purity, its freedom from professionalism and hippodroming. But as that is available in winter alone, the game of bowls comes opportunely, offering similar features for other seasons of the year. A yachtsman from across the great lakes happened not long ago to witness a game of bowls on the picturesque grounds of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club, and he was not more struck with the game than with the surroundings amid which it was played. "Why," he exclaimed, "this is idyllic!" And truly the scene was a bright one. A spit of sodded land beside the club house with flowers and low trees—on one side the tumbling deep blue of Lake Ontario, on the other the smoother waters of Toronto Bay, alive with yachts and row boats—a group of tennis players in flannels and club colours; too windy for the racquet they turn to bowling, and are joined by some heavier, lazier members—it is ladies' day and every trip of the club boat, the *Esperanza*, brings a bevy of the dear visitors; the city's smoke and roar are dimly distant; flags are flying, white sails flapping, and the sound of music is borne over the water from the hotels on Hanlan's Island not far away. Do you wonder that our yachtsman from the Empire State took a fancy to bowling?

Why should not many such a scene be witnessed at the seaside or in the suburbs of our cities? The game is an attractive one, simple, healthful, inexpensive, and there is absolutely nothing objectionable about it. Pursued as it ought to be, apart from the accompaniments of betting or other excess, it will be found an admirable game. "It can be resorted to by all without regard to skill, age, grade, class, craft or condition." Truly a democratic recreation!

"The popularity of the game," says a Scottish author, "may in some measure be attributed to its simplicity. Its art is easily acquired, and its laws being based upon the broad rules of equity, or those that regulate common life, may be readily determined as cases present themselves. Fancy points may fascinate the few, but bowl playing belongs to the many and apparently is destined to accomplish much good."

"Bowl playing, for many reasons, stands foremost among our outdoor pastimes, chiefly because it is a light, cheerful and healthy exercise. No other game is more closely associated with genial mirth, or conduces in a greater degree to sociality and good fellowship." Such is the strain in which the game of bowls is referred to in "Mitchell's Manual of Bowl Playing," published in 1882. "It is not only a gentle and enlivening recreation," continues this panegyrist, "but in strategy and general interest is unsurpassed by any other game."

The late Earl of Eglinton, at one time Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, a great patron of the game, used the following language in regard to it: "I feel certain that the encouragement of such games as curling and bowling, especially among the poorer classes of our countrymen, will do more to promote their comfort and welfare than all the beer bills and Sunday trading bills the Legislature has ever passed."

The bools row—the bools row,
Your ain as weel as mine;
O bonnily the bools row
When summer days are fine

bursts out, in his bowler's song, "W. W. M.," who has played the game from the years of war, 1814, 1815, to the year of grace 1880. And he adds:

Then let us pray for summer suns
To make the grass grow green,
That we may hae some bonnie runs
Wi' fremmit or wi' frien.

The game of lawn bowls is played on a level green, about forty-two yards long, which should have a dry ditch or trench at each end, say a foot broad and three inches deep, beyond which should be a bank eighteen inches above the level of the green to stop the bowls at the dry ditch. Each player is provided with a pair of wooden bowls, preferably of lignum vitæ. These are made not quite spherical, but rather flatter at the ends than over the running part, as they are intended not to run in a straight line, but to take a bend or bias to one side. This bias or draw is given to them altogether by their shape, loading not being permitted, at all events not in match games. From four and one-half to five and one-half inches is the usual diameter of a bowl. There is no minimum limit, but they must not exceed sixteen and one-half inches in circumference, and, I quote from the "Rules of the Game of Lawn Bowls," compiled from Mitchell's and Taylor's manuals, Glasgow, 1882-7, which were adopted by the Granite and Victoria Clubs in Toronto: "No bowl with a draw of less than one yard and a half in a run of thirty yards should be allowed at a match." The only further machinery used in the game is a round ball of white earthenware, two to three inches in diameter, called the "jack," and one or two india-rubber mats, on which the player places one foot when delivering his bowl.

Eight players, four on a side, constitute a rink, and the men are classed as leads, second and third players, and skips or drivers, each playing two bowls. Priority of play having been decided by toss or otherwise, the first player or lead throws the jack along the green, subject to the direction of his skip, and then proceeds to play toward it, so aiming to the right or left of the jack that his bowl, when coming to rest, shall curve in as impelled by its shape, and lie near the jack or touching it. The distance of the jack may not be less than sixty feet but may be twice that. The lead of the opposing side now plays his bowl, with the object of lying nearer the jack than his rival; then the leads play their remaining bowls alternately, and bowl about is delivered by the others until it becomes the turn of the skips to cease directing and go down to play.

Now, suppose the rinks to be commanded respectively by Kemp and Geddes, the latter lying shot, half guarded, within a foot to the right or fore-hand of the jack, the back-hand or left passage to the jack being blocked, Kemp must probably draw to lie the shot. We will presume that he does so and that his bowl lies half in front of the jack and almost touching it. There is no reasonable prospect for Geddes but to ride, i.e., play with sufficient force to carry the jack away by giving unusual force to his bowl, trusting to chance that, when the jack comes to rest away from the group that formerly surrounded it, his (Geddes') bowl may lie nearest to it. But, unfortunately for him, in the position we are supposing, a bowl belonging to one of Kemp's men lies a few feet overplayed and the jack has been driven by Geddes' last bowl close to this one, which counts. Geddes has therefore to make another draw, which he does gracefully and successfully, lying the shot, 110 feet from the mat, with a dozen balls of friends and foes at varying distances in the interval. The end looks blue for Kemp; but he has plenty of grit, and bowls which have a great deal of draw, say seven or eight feet of draw. He aims, therefore, with great deliberation about that distance to one side of the jack, his ball makes a beautiful curve, and just grazing the inside of Geddes' bowl comes to rest, the final bowl and winning shot. Kemp thus wins the end, for the side which has at the finish of an end one or more balls lying nearer the jack than those of their opponents counts one point for each ball so placed.

I shall not weary your readers by discussing the merits of "touchers," meaning bowls which have touched the jack, or the demerits of "ditchers" or "burned bowls." The true inwardness of these, as well as of "raking," throwing the "kitty," deciding upon touchers in the ditch or upon bowls out of boundaries, must be learned by reference to some manual of bowling. An ordinary game consists of nine points, but competitions are often made of twenty-one ends. For prizes, the game played usually consists in Scotland of twenty-five points.

There are some thirty thousand bowlers in Scotland, and in 1882, according to "Mitchell's Manual," there were 364 clubs. These are spread over Scotland, "pervading almost every nook and corner." At the annual match between Glasgow and Ayrshire it is common for 440 players to go up to Glasgow from that famous shire, and for an equal number of "Glesca chieft" to go down to Kilwinning and Kilmarnock, Ayr or Ardrossan, and many other points, for the return match. Special rates are made by the railways for these occasions, when bowlers may ride from thirty to one hundred and twenty miles and return for a fare of four shillings, equivalent to our dollar. There are two score of bowling greens in Glasgow, and it is a rule that competitors in this annual event must play on neutral grass. The trophy played for in this "gentleman's contest" is known as the Glasgow Association Cup, won by the club which makes the greatest number of shots per rink. The competition for the Earl of Eglinton's silver tankard—provided years ago by the late Earl, who was a very fair player and a true sport—is regarded as a great event, and proud is the club whose name is engraved upon it as a reward of being a winner.

In the contest on August 2, 1888, played at various places in Ayrshire, between 105 rinks from 22 clubs in Glasgow and 34 in Ayrshire, the aggregate score made by the city clubs was 2,906, or say 27.6 shots per rink, against 3,278 for the country clubs, an average per rink of 31.2, the game consisting of 31 heads.

In the summer of 1888 a single-handed bowling tournament took place on the green of the Kingston Club, Maxwell Road, Glasgow, which lasted for fifteen days and in which some four hundred players took part. There was £200 offered in prizes, and the winner of the first prize, 100 guineas, was Mr. J. Brown, of Sanquhar, who defeated in the final tie R. W. Batty, of Kingston, and thereby became champion bowler of Scotland. The description given in the *South Suburban Press* of the contest between these two players shows some noteworthy play.

"On the fifteenth and concluding day," says that journal, "only eight bowlers were left to contest for the big prizes. The play was good, but the greatest interest was of course taken in the final tie between Brown, of Sanquhar, and Batty, of Kingston, which began shortly after six o'clock p.m. (The twilights are long in Scotland.) In the first head the former lay two, but Batty, with one of his famous rides, scattered both bowls and won by two shots. Batty, following his usual practice, threw a 'short jack' (i.e., threw the white ball aimed at a short distance) and lay on the 'kitty,' but Brown carried it, and Batty missing a 'ride,' his opponent got three shots. Brown threw a 'long jack,' and close play ensued, with the result that he added another two to his score. Still adhering to his long jack, he lay near with two, but Batty prevailed with his second bowl. Brown took one shot with his third and won. In the fourth head Brown lay one bowl before and another behind the jack, but the Kingston player, amid applause, got between them and won. Again he threw a short jack and was successful, the game standing: Batty, 4; Brown, 6.

"In the next head the players 'peeled,' or tied—6 each. Batty got one next head, but Brown at the next gained a pair, followed by another pair—game, 10 to 7. The next couple of heads made the game 11 for Brown against 9. The Sanquhar man still kept ahead, and at a further stage he had 15 to 9. At the next—the sixteenth head—the figures stood: Brown, 15; Batty, 11. The Sanquhar man got three at the next head, making 18. Batty drew a beauty and increased his score to the dozen. He followed by other two, making 14. But Brown lay at the next head with a spare bowl, which he did not throw, but turned round and passed it through his legs, amid laughter. Brown in the twentieth head rested on the jack, with another bowl behind, and thus lay game. Batty 'rode' successfully, sending his own bowl into the ditch and the jack four yards away. Brown played up, and amid applause struck the kitty, or jack, lying only a yard from it. Batty failed with his last to 'spring the winner,' and his opponent stood 20. In the final and twenty-first head Brown gained the winning point. The game had lasted for two hours and a half, was very exciting, especially at the finish, and was witnessed with breathless interest by several hundred ladies and gentlemen."

This reads to us on this side the ocean like extraordinary play, but I am assured that contests quite as close are common upon the beautifully true bowling greens of Scotland.

The pair of vagrants, as they term themselves, who wrote, under the title of "Cricket Across the Sea," a description of the tour made in Great Britain by Canadian cricketers in 1887—their first game after leaving Canada was played, by the way, against All New York at Seabright—choose the following lines as a motto for their title page:

I prize my peerless pastime for its freedom and its fun—
It revels in the grassy plain and glows beneath the sun;
I've heard of foreign pleasures that are very fair to see,
But cricket, glorious cricket, is quite fair enough for me.
And he that will not play, or pay, to help the manly game,
May lie forgotten in the grave—an unremembered name.

Quite as warm in praise of lawn bowls are some of its votaries. They would adopt, doubtless, not only the first couplet here given, but would alter the whole stanza to apply to bowling. Said a staid Pollokshields "driver" to me: "Man, there's nothing like it for the merchant or banker as a safety valve for business pressure." I agreed with him that it was a capital game for middle-aged or elderly men. "And why not for young men?" asked he, with as near an approach to anger as he ever permits himself. "I tell ye it's a grand game for the young. As