



THE WINNING STONE

CURLING: THE ROARING GAME

By R. STANLEY WEIR

Drawings by courtesy Longmans, Green & Co.

SCOTLAND, the land that has made the world its grateful debtor in so many ways, will be remembered, for all time, for having invented, developed or preserved the two most delightful of sports: golf for spring, summer and autumn; curling for winter. It is characteristic of the Scotsman that although he is the most formidable of warriors in actual strife or battle; although in the mimic warfare of football he is likewise most redoubtable; he still, vastly prefers peace and peaceful games. He is not of those who, it is said, would rather fight than eat. Fighting or the semblance of fighting he abhors. So much is this the case that his national pastimes, golf and curling, competitive though they are, disguise or half conceal this feature. In golf the play proceeds not in opposed but in parallel lines; the players walk together and amiably converse between strokes. For one golfer to hurtle himself roughly against another is unthinkable; never does he interfere with his opponent, not even with his opponent's ball and, in fact, usually apologizes if, by chance, he lays a stymie. Contrast, too, the behavior of the noisy crowd at certain games with the silent appreciative "gallery" at golf! What a blot upon certain popular

games, not Scottish in their origin or characteristics, that the players may be badgered or hooted and that the air becomes thickly charged with the most strenuous and unconcealed hostility! Not so with golf and its traditions so quietly and splendidly evolved by North Britons; those dignified self-respecting and brotherly men who have schooled themselves (or is it native to the superman?) to applaud their opponents, even to assist them (as when the ball is in hiding), and to obliterate all possible trace of brutal rivalry and contention. Say we not well then that golf is the game of man civilized, refined and skilled!

Scarcely less than golf is curling a game of brotherly love. It is bowls on ice. Sides and competitions there are, of course; and you are permitted to dislodge your opponent's "stone" with the object of lying a bit nearer the tee yourself; but I should not like to be in the shoes of the man who would "boo," or shout, or try to "rattle" the "skip" of either side as he delivers his stone. Let him, if he is in the game, shout or "super-up" as loud as Boanerges and sweep as strenuously as Vulcan might, once the stone is in play; but, otherwise, it would be better for that man if he had never been born.

GOLF ILLUSTRATED

I have said that curling is the game of bowls on ice; but there is none of the leisurely survey with which the bowler surveys his bowl standing, as a friend of mine used to do, with his arms folded in the manner of the First Consul. No. When the stone is dispatched all is activity; with broom in readiness to obey the skip's behest; and, at the word, never housewife swept her floor with half the vigor that four pairs of stalwart arms smooth the pathway of a reluctant stone.

The story is told of a novice who hearing his skip suddenly shout: "Sweep her up!", a stone having displayed symptoms of sluggishness, began to sweep with enormous vigor *behind* the lagging stone. Let coming novitiates take note.

The problem of the requisite force to be exerted in propelling a stone is always before the curler much as it is with the golfer and his putt. Stories are told of golfers who behold all things mundane from the point of view of golf; these can be matched by one related by Mr. Gordon Grant, author of *The Complete Curler*, who, walking with a fellow-curler on a torrid day of June, saw ahead of them a third curler and remarked: "Why there's John —." "Ay, so it is; that's him sure enough; but he's no use whatever."

"Why? What's the matter with him?" asked Mr. Gordon Grant.

"Ach! he's always *too strong!*" If Mr Gordon

Grant had been a golfer he would have reminded his friend of the maxim: Never up, never in.

Curling is a succession of silences and vocal explosions. There is still room, as in golf, for comments upon the weather, or rapid generalizations on the politics of the hour, but in the main, as in golf and *Hamlet*, "the play is the thing." There is a captain or skip for each side who is responsible for the tactics or strategy. His three assistant stalwarts (the younger player usually leading off and so on in point of playing strength till the skip comes down from the far end where he has been directing the play) are obedient to his every command. "Tak' this borrow" cries the skip to junior at the other end, indicating by his broom a certain space wide of the central tee. "Tak' this borrow wi' the in-turn and lie dead." Happy is the skip if the junior's delivery has skilfully blocked the way for the responding junior on the other side. "Noo, Sandy, come right in here. Play cannily wi' the out-turn and tak' this borrow." So to Number Two. "Well played Sandy, she's coming on brawly—coming on like a queen. Soop her up a little! Soop her up (this to one, two and three who have been following the stone up the ice). "Hold hard sonnies. She's a beauty—played Sir, played!"

There is room for much variety in exhortation as the skips alternately direct their fellow-players in curling contests. One skip is all energy and vocifera-



AN EXCITING MATCH AND A REMARKABLE PHOTOGRAPH

Showing the four members of a rink watching the winning stone which one of them had just curled from the hack 42 yards away. The match was between Murren and Grindelwald teams and played at Murren, Switzerland. Mr. G. Herbert Windeler, a former president of the U. S. G. A. is the center figure of the group sweeping the stone



CURLING AT THE COUNTRY CLUB, BROOKLINE, MASS.

tion; another (but he is the exception) adopts a quieter mode. Every player, of course, is equipped with a broom with which to sweep the ice in front of the advancing stone so as to make certain that it will traverse the rink. Should there be any doubt of this the favorite and usual exhortation is "Soop (sweep) her up! Soop her up! She's a hog." The "hog," be it said, is a stone which fails to reach a transverse line about five-sixths the distance between tee and tee, and is then ignominiously put out of the game. Silence, we wish to say, reigns supreme as each player delivers his stone but let there be a skilful bit of play reversing at a critical juncture a minus to a plus score, and the deep throated shouts and explosions of applause are such as no other sport can rouse. There is no gainsaying, at such times, that curling is indeed the roaring game.

Curling, in Scotland, is traditionally an out-door game but, as that country is not a land of continuous frost in winter, it has been, until recently, the most precarious of sports. Sometimes a whole winter, or a succession of winters would pass without a game. But the invention of the "Tarmac" (tar-macadam) rink has wrought a great change. On a certain pond at Moffat, Scotland, an enthusiastic curler, Mr. John Anderson, noted that from 1906 to 1913 (eight seasons) only forty days' play were available; whereas on a Tarmac rink in the same town, during the same

period, 200 days, exclusive of the forty just accounted for, were available. "Glaciariums" are now established in many cities of Britain with the result that curling and other ice games have been greatly stimulated.

Canada, of course, is specially favored by nature for such an ice-game as curling. The clubs devoted to this sport are even more numerous than those given over to golf; and it is quite common for the golfer, forced to relinquish his clubs, his greens and course being almost fathoms deep in snow from December to March, to take up curling. Many of Canada's crack golfers have become able skips and a company of Canadian curlers, who visited Scotland in 1909 and "swept" all before them victoriously, numbered quite a few devotees of the Royal and Ancient game.

Some non-golfing curlers, of Scottish blood and tenacious of orthodox practice in curling, strongly deprecate, however, and with reason, the habit of some golf-curlers who introduce into the vernacular of the winter game the terminology of their favorite summer sport. What, indeed, are we to think of the conduct of a curler and skip who, wishing a member of his rink or team to bear in to the right or left with his shot, orders him to play *with a slice* or *a pull*! or announces a lead of four points by saying that he is "four-up." These are solecisms which no self-respecting curler or golfer will commit.

