

SOME WHIST PLAYERS.

THE GREAT PLAYERS TO MEET AT MILWAUKEE IN APRIL.

Increasing Popularity of the Game—Likelihood That Cavendish Will Be Present at the Tournament—Noted Players Who Will Participate and Their Record.

Whist was never so popular as now. It is in the air. Tournaments are in progress everywhere. The leading clubs in Philadelphia are trying to conquer their old enemy and four times champion, the Hamilton club. At Worcester the rivals are at it for fame and tricks. Young's hotel in Boston was last week the scene of a festive dinner given to the clubs that had just finished the state tourney at whist, billiards



JOHN RHEINART.

and pool. The press club in Boston had a hot fight of it, until the knights of the quill had to acknowledge that they could not "beat" the Boston Herald. The New York Tribune has lately noticed several tourneys among college clubs, and the Milwaukee Sentinel chronicles the usual winter hunt for the scalps of Western whist clubs among each other.

But there is on foot a tourney which will eclipse them all. The Milwaukee Whist Club, the largest in the country, has issued invitations to all the clubs interested in whist to meet at Milwaukee during the week beginning April 13th. All the big clubs have accepted, and some of the foreign lights of the whist world are expected, perhaps the old warhorse Cavendish himself. Many a whist fiend would go farther than Milwaukee to cut into a rubber with the famous writer on whist; and the added possibility of beating him. What a lion the player would be who could say: "Yes, I went to Milwaukee, and we beat Cavendish two straight games!"

But there are men in this country that are so dead to any sense of true fame that they would sooner beat the champion team of the Hamilton club than Cavendish himself. Cavendish has been beaten very often both by better players and by better luck; but the Hamilton has so far an unbroken record of victories. Perhaps it is safe to say that Mr. Gus Remak of this team is the best whist player in America, if not the strongest now living. He possesses in an eminent degree all the essentials of an expert. Thoroughly up in the "books," to a clear head for strategy and a keen eye for small cards he adds a sound judgment of human nature, which is very necessary to the match player. His great strength lies in his rapid insight, and his power of generalization. As an instance: a player on his right had shown that he was inclined to play a very forward game, and take great chances on finding the strength with his partner that he lacked himself. Presently this player led the suit in which he had evidently trumped the second round. No one called for trumps. He argued that a player of his temperament would have led the trumps if he had had any chance at all, even three indifferent ones. So he had probably at



CAVENDISH.

the most two weak trumps. The original leader's partner not calling had not more than four trumps, if that Mr. Remak had only two, so he placed five, perhaps six, with his partner, and as his partner made no sign he inferred that the rest of his hand was absolutely worthless. On this generalization he treated the hand as a double-dummy problem, the solution of which was a matter of four by cards in his favor. After the hand the player on his right remarked that he was very lucky to find six trumps and two short suits in his partner's hand. Remak only smiled; the cards had been exactly as he thought; the leader had the 6 and 2 of trumps, on the left were the king, 10 and 9. Remak had the queen and 5, and his partner had the other six, no other card in his hand above a seven.

At the Boston Press club, E. C. Howell, of the Herald, is the champion. He knits his brows and frowns horribly during the early part of the hand, but when an opportunity occurs for a pretty coup, which he never misses, he inclines his head to the right and smiles. Then the adversaries know that they are lost. It was Howell that solved the problem which vexed whist clubs for so long, as to how to arrange eight players in a tournament that each should have each one of the other seven for a partner once, play against him once, and hold the same hands once, duplicate hands being played at two tables simultaneously. The total number of tricks taken by each

player then to be divided by the most taken by any player who held that hand. This would result in an average similar to that of the baseball clubs who divide the number of games won by the number they might have won; the highest average winning.

While the tournament playing will of course be a prominent feature at the congress, it will not be the only business on hand. The Milwaukee club will appoint a committee to draw up a code of laws more suited to the peculiarities of the American game than the English code now in use. The new code will be acted on by the delegates from all the clubs, and will probably be the future authority for America. This will settle the difficulty now experienced by so many various ways of playing the game throughout the country. In the East they usually count the rubber points, giving three points for a score of five to nothing; two points if the adversaries are not half way, and only one if they are 3 or 4 points up; always adding two points for winning the third or rubber game. In New England many count right ahead, which is the universal way on the many trams where a rubber is indulged in to pass the time while travelling. The odd tricks are counted up indefinitely, until the play ceases, and then those having the most to their credit claim the victory. In the West the common way is to play for a definite length of time perhaps from 8 until 11, and on the tap of the bell the side that has made the most odd tricks wins. This is manifestly unfair, as a slow player may have only played twenty hands in that time; but won an average of a trick a hand, while the faster players have played sixty hands and have not won half a trick a hand, but are still the winners.

Another point of difference is the manner of determining the trump. At the Milwaukee Whist club, and in many others in the west the trump is cut from the still pack, two packs being used in play. Most players object to this, as it spoils some of the fine points of the game. When Cavendish was asked for his opinion of it two years ago he did not think the matter



RUFUS ALLEN. R. F. FOSTER.

worthy of serious attention, the old way being so much the best; yet Mr. J. Rheinart, of the Milwaukee club, is a strong advocate for cutting the trump from the still pack, and his opinion ought to have some weight, as he was the man of all others that the great Deschappelles fancied for his partner in important matches. He always took Rheinart for a partner when he played for a thousand francs a game, and on his careful play Deschappelles is said to have based many of his most brilliant coups, which would have been impossible but for the accuracy of the information that Rheinart always gave of the exact contents of his hand.

Another point that will come up at the



CASSIUS M. PAINE. EUGENE S. ELLIOTT.

congress will be the merits of the new system of leading to show the exact number of small cards in the suit. Writers on this subject are very fond of claiming that "all the best players" now adopt these leads. In an article in the March Harper this claim is made. Nothing can be further from the truth. None of the strongest players or clubs have adopted them and all the evidence adduced by those who favor them is purely ex-parte. The Hamilton club tried them for several months and found them a sure trick losing game. Their weakness, according to Mr. Foster, who has studied the matter pretty thoroughly, lies in the fact that they never overlook the real object of leading suits in a particular way, which is to inform your partner when the suit is established. The new leads substitute for this a lot of often entirely useless information about the number of small cards in the suit and hold back until the second or third round the really important matter, the fact that the suit is established. This is particularly noticeable in the erratic queen leads, which may mean almost anything the first round, and on the second the adversaries usually have taken the lead



by trumping in, and proceed to avail themselves of the minute information intended for the partner alone, who has perhaps, passed tricks he might have won while waiting for the long winded explanation of the contents of his partner's hand. Many things will be settled at Milwaukee.

ENGLISH SNIPE HUNTING

HOW THE RARE BIRD IS FOLLOWED BY SPORTSMEN.

Where the English Snipe is Found—The Best Gun to Use—How the Shells Should be Loaded—Habits of the Bird—Shooting in the Spring.

With the melting of the winter snows the latter part of this month commences the spring migration northward of the English or jack snipe, as he is sometimes called. No migratory bird moves more leisurely, nor by shorter stages of flight en route to its breeding grounds in the far north. That these are located in very high latitudes we have the testimony of Dr. I. I. Hayes, the Arctic explorer, who, in



ENGLISH SNIPE SHOOTING.
(From the famous drawing by J. M. Tracy.)

August—on the occasion of his furthest journey towards the pole, in latitude about 82 degrees, at a spring hole surrounded by a swamp, covered with green moss—saw a large number of these birds, whose feeding places had not been far distant. Though it delights in moist ground, it displays at times a curious predilection for bushy spots and the outskirts of woods. Its favorite haunts, however, are on marshes where cattle are pastured, or in the interior about fresh water springs surrounded by a considerable area of swamp. It, however, may more surely be found on pastured marshes, where its favorite feeding spots are in the soft oozy tracks made by the wandering herds. A marsh which has been abandoned by the cattle will in a single season lose its attractions for the snipe; but so soon as it is reoccupied for pasturage that bird will promptly reappear.

The plumage of our English snipe is darker than that of the European sort, the entire upper parts being of a very deep brown inclining to black, each feather tipped with light reddish brown and dirty grey. The neck is of a reddish color and the under parts are grey barred, with very dark brown or black. The wings and tail are also brownish black, the latter tipped with a reddish bar, has one or two light covered feathers on each side. In point of size our bird differs from its European congener. The latter measuring thirteen inches in length, while the former attains only to ten and one half inches. The nest of our variety is rude and simple, and is made on the ground without the slightest attempt at concealment. It generally contains four pale olive colored eggs, rather lengthened in form and spotted with brown more thickly so at the obtuse end. They breed only once a year and generally on very high latitudes. Although their nests have been seen on the more northern portion of Canada, advancing civilization has now driven them to wilder parts.

It may be that the English snipe as well as the other sorts which make a lengthy journey, as with the "papabake"—our upland or grass plover—of Louisiana, are capable of conveying a supply of food among the plumage. Taxidermists who have prepared the skins of "papabakes," shot immediately after their arrival in Louisiana from the Arctic circle, have observed attached to their feathers a number of species of small mollusks, found only in very high latitudes. It is possible, therefore that the English snipe may avail themselves of a similar provision, as a means of sustenance, during an enforced halt on the long journey, where other food is not obtainable.

English snipe shooting in the spring has been subject to many annidversions. It is claimed that a female bird killed at that season, means the destruction of a brood of several. This argument may be carried still further, to the effect, that a female killed at any time will be productive of the same results. Whether, she be destroyed, containing developed eggs or not, the germs of reproduction are always present and her death at any season means equally the loss of so many young.

If spring shooting were abolished, there can be no question that the sparing of females at that season, so far as the question of an increase is concerned, would be of vast benefit to the shooting in the autumn, but as the former is, with certain local exceptions permitted, northern sportsmen will not be able to resist the opportunity which that sport offers on the first-aside from duck shooting—which can be availed of after the close of winter.

Of the equipment, personal and material to successfully hunt English snipe, the first is found on that individual who, when on marshy ground moves slowly, but who

when the bird flushes, is celerity itself in handling the gun. Many sportsmen, on oozy, yielding marsh endeavor to move as rapidly as on the firmer footing of the upland. This is a mistake, inasmuch as the effort to accomplish it, involves a so much larger output of muscular effort, that fatigue quickly supervenes, with a consequent unsteadiness of aim. No bird, which has been flushed and marked down, may be approached more leisurely than the English snipe. When it alights and is disposed to feed, it is so closely intent upon this purpose, and it works slowly to the windward, not deviating more than four or five yards from a direct course. The longer interval which elapses before it is again flushed, the better the chance for a possible shot. Many sportsmen make the mistake of hastening too rapidly towards the spot where they have marked down a bird, and it frequent-

ly happens that when they have reached the place where they supposed it to be, one will flush out of gun shot, either to the right or left. This they suppose to be the individual one which they are in pursuit of, and consequently turn off, instead of following on in a direct course, when, nine times out of ten, they will flush the snipe of which they are in search. This is supposable only in the case where the services of a dog are not availed of. In hunting with such, the setter will be found the better. It must, however, be specially trained for the purpose; one which is most admirable in upland shooting will be found almost worthless over English snipe. The dog must be trained to work slowly and always within the radius of a gun-shot; moreover, it must be guided entirely by the motion of the hands; to nothing is the English snipe more sensitive nor does anything make it wilder, than shouts, yells and shrill whistling. In wild, blustering weather a dog is of little or no use; on such a day he must work to the windward or across the wind, and can hardly serve other than as a retriever, which as a matter of fact constitutes his principal value in English snipe shooting. The best day for the sport is one which is soft and hazy with a light southerly breeze. Then the sportsman walking down the wind, will usually find the birds gentle and approachable. Some gunners prefer to shoot at an English snipe the moment it rises from the ground; others wait until it has attained a distance of 25 or 30 yards, when it will in a measure have abandoned its zig-zag motion and settled into one comparatively steady. Side shots when obtainable are far surer and better. It must be conceded, however, that few birds are more difficult to kill or more capricious in their humor. In the morning they soar high in the air and flush at long distances; in the afternoon the same birds, if the weather conditions are favorable, may be easily approached and when flushed, if not killed, fly but a short distance before alighting. The impulse on the first instance probably comes from the fact that they have already copiously stayed their hunger; while in the second the imperative demands of the stomach are in the process of fulfillment. While English snipe do not congregate in flocks, they are by no means nongregarious. It will frequently be found that where one is flushed, from five to twenty, according to the quality of the ground, will be found within a limited area. The sound of the gun on propitious days does not disturb others, when one is flushed, but on murky, drizzling

der for the first shot, then the choke in case of a miss for the second. The objection to the choke of both barrels is that unless a bird is wide off, he is apt to be mutilated so as to be unfit for eating. Indeed, it is a question whether the choking of gun barrels has been an unmixed blessing.

Apart from its power of mutilating game it tempts men to risk very long shots by which a bird may be struck with only a single pellet with a force sufficient to wound it and consign it to a painful and lingering death.

To the old sportsman the recollection of the former abundance of English snipe compared with their present vastly diminished number, begets melancholy retrospection. The reputation of the bird for its edible qualities has placed it upon a pinnacle almost on a level with that of the woodcock. This has probably come for the reason that both may be cooked and eaten undrawn a property common to none other of the feathered species.

DAVID WECHSLER.

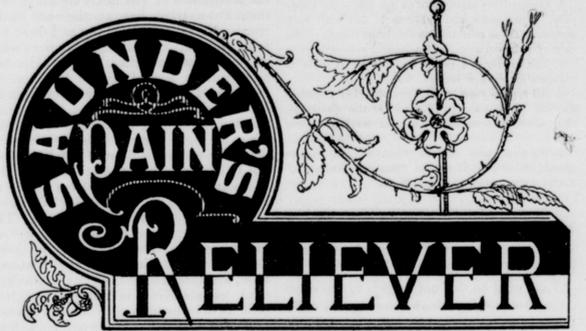
A Historic Necklace.

An empress' necklace has been creating a considerable sensation in Madrid, both for its beauty and its great value, as well as for its historic associations. The necklace belonged to the Empress Eugenie, and was a present from Ismail, the Viceroy of Egypt, who sent it to the empress in 1869,

on the occasion of her visit to open the Suez canal. A few years ago all the crown diamonds and jewels were put up at auction by the republic. Among the buyers was a jeweler from Madrid, who bought the necklace because the Empress Eugenie was a Spaniard by birth. He has waited to display his treasure until now, so that his necklace should not be cast into the shade by the more splendid crown diamonds. The necklace consists of great pearls of singular beauty, and is priced at \$75,000.—Boston Beacon.

That's the Way I Shoot.

An officer in attendance at a shooting competition noticed two men firing with anything but precision. Approaching them he exclaimed angrily: "You fellows don't know how to shoot; lend me the rifle and let me show you." "Bang!" and the target was missed. A broad grin overspread the features of the two privates, but the officer was equal to the occasion. Turning to the first, with a frown upon his countenance, he remarked, "That's the way you shoot sir!" A second attempt, and a similar result. Turning to the other he continued, "And that's the way you shoot, sir." A third shot, and an inner was fluked. With pardonable pride the worthy officer returned the rifle, triumphantly adding, "And that's the way I shoot." The men ever since have entertained a very high opinion of him as a marksman.—Ex.



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THE ENGLISH SNIPE.

days, when a bird is put up, his cry of "scap, scap," will be answered by all within the sound of his note taking wing with an answering call.

Since the introduction of the full choke gun, the sportsman has secured an advantage in shooting English snipe, when they are wild and at distances heretofore considered impossible. He has gained a killing margin of at least ten yards over former limits. This means a great deal beyond a range of thirty yards, inasmuch as the bird above that distance measurably loses his zig-zag method of flight and has settled into one more regular and steady. The weapon most available for use in English snipe shooting is probably a 12-bore—one barrel plain cylinder, the other a full choke—loaded with 3½ drams of ball powder and 1½ ounces of No. 8 shot. The cylin-