

BILLIARD TOURNEY.

THE SCIENCE OF ANGLES AND CAROMS

AN EPIHOME OF LEADING CONTESTS HELD

IN THIS COUNTRY—THE ARRANGEMENTS

FOR THE GARNIER TOURNAMENT PER-

FECTED — BRIEF SKETCH OF THE

PLAYERS WHO WILL PARTICIPATE.

The announcement has been made that another billiard tournament is to be held in this City, at Tammany Hall, commencing Monday evening. It is only during the last few years that the beauties of billiards have been developed in this country. For a long time the professional players adhered to the four balls and large tables. In France, where the game was hundreds of years old, billiards had long been refined, and the prevailing game was proven to be the best medium through which to acquire perfection in this department of amusements. In this country the game was gradually improved upon. First the push stroke was abolished, then the tables were made smaller and the yawning pockets were no longer used; after that all caroms were made equal, and finally the French or three-ball game became the only legitimate billiards of the country. To be sure, the majority of amateurs prefer to play the four-ball game, but it is because they resort to billiards as an exercise or for pastime, and not for improvement. Those who play billiards merely because of the beauties of the game, because of the science which can be developed on the "field of green," are now earnest advocates of three balls. The French game is the real science of billiards, and it is the only medium through which to acquire perfection. It is a game requiring a perfect knowledge of angles, for on the precision with which these are calculated depends much of the player's success. The skilled player must, of course, be a master of the effects of force and follow shots, *misses*, draws, and caroms, both common and cushion, but the angles are the main obstacles to overcome. Until the player can mentally calculate all of the perplexing lines capable of being made on a billiard-table, his game will amount to but little. The art of "nursing" helps to swell the totals, but the genius of the game is in bringing the balls together.

Not only has the science of billiards been improved upon, but the game itself has been redeemed from all the influences which once rendered it distasteful. Now the game is indorsed by the better class of citizens, and it is estimated that there are now in constant use ten tables where there was but one three years ago. Billiards is now recognized as one of the most harmless, fascinating, and instructive of amusements. Its chief requirements are a clear eye, steady nerves, a delicate touch, quick perception, a knowledge of lines and angles, and above all thorough self-control. To be a successful professional billiardist the player must be honest, sober, industrious, and ever preserve an even temper—honest, because of his reputation; sober, because if otherwise he soon loses his nerve; industrious, because constant practice is necessary to reach perfection, and good tempered for manifest reasons. But the greatest of all these attributes is honesty.

This City has ever been more or less interested in billiards. The several tournaments held in New-York have all been well patronized. In June, 1873, the first three-ball tournament was commenced and carried to a successful termination. The players were Albert Garnier, Cyrille Dion, Maurice Daly, Francis Ubassy, Joseph Dion, and John Deery. It was on this occasion that Garnier established himself as the "king" of billiardists. He won a challenge cup—the same which was subsequently stolen from him—a fine table, and a large sum of money. The second prize was won by Cyrille Dion, the third by Maurice Daly. Garnier had the best general and Ubassy the best single average. In November of the same year another tournament was held in Chicago. The West was represented by Snyder, Slosson, Zessunger, and Ubassy. The East sent the brothers Dion, Daly, and Garnier. The New-York tournament was fairly eclipsed in number of games, in size of runs, and in a crowning average. The Western players were greatly overmatched, the only one who made any sort of a show being the youthful Slosson. There were many notably exciting games, some of them being won by only a single point. The result was finally in favor of Albert Garnier, who once more crowned himself victor over all. At that time Ubassy won the second and Cyrille Dion the third prize. In March, 1874, a tournament was held in Boston, and Garnier was again the winner of the first prize. The best single and general averages and the highest run were credited to this same player. Thus in three successive tournaments had he proved himself the best of players. In the Boston tourney Cyrille Dion won second and Joseph Dion third prize. Daly was at the bottom of the list.

The next event was the Delaney tournament, which was one of unbroken pleasure. It placed billiards upon its proper footing, and forever freed the game from all discreditable adjuncts. Evening after evening Tammany Hall was filled, hundreds of games being interested spectators. There were nine entries for the prizes, among the number being Maurice Vignaux, of France, who crossed the ocean on purpose to cross cues with the hitherto invincible Garnier. In all there were thirty-six games, and when the last was played it was known that the new-comer was the victor. Garnier and Daly were on equal terms for second place, and all the others had received prizes save Cyrille Dion and Daniels, of Boston. In this tournament the best single average was made by Joseph Dion, and the best general average by Garnier. The tournament which commences to-morrow evening bids fair to take a higher rank than any which has preceded it. The entries are seven in number, as follows: Joseph Dion, Maurice Daly, George F. Slosson, Cyrille Dion, A. P. Rudolphe, William Sexton, and Albert Garnier. With the exception of Sexton, these are all well known as first-class professionals. Thus will be Sexton's debut as a professional, and it remains to be seen whether he has the material in him which makes great billiardists. His more ardent admirers, those who have seen him in his practice games, are confident that he will be close upon the winner, even if he does not carry off the first prize. But in this they may be permitting their friendship to run away with their judgment. Most of Sexton's games have been played in his own room, on tables to which he has long been accustomed. His victories over Rudolphe, on which much stress is laid, should be taken with a grain of allowance. Rudolphe is known to be a man of expedients. Sexton has had practically no experience whatever, and in this tournament much interest will centre upon his performance. If he wins his opening game with George Slosson next Tuesday afternoon, then his after success will be much more certain. But next to Garnier, he carries more weight than any player in the tournament. Mr. Garnier is a man of impulses; a mere trifle often upsets him. The care and anxiety of the tournament, his determination to make it an unquestionable success, will, it is anticipated, detract considerably from his skill as a professional. Of his skill there is no doubt, and but for his mind being so occupied with the details of the undertaking, he would be well nigh invincible. He is undoubtedly the greatest artist in the billiard world. Joseph, the elder of the two Dions, is a player of acknowledged ability and of established reputation. His force shots, and his delicacy of touch in nursing, are his strongest points. Cyrille Dion is a strong, steady player. He is noted for great nerve, and seems to be at his best when far behind. But Cyrille is given to carelessness, and, the games being short, this fault alone may be a costly one. However, there are those who believe he has as good a chance as any one to win first prize. Maurice Daly is, in point of skill, second to none. He has an excellent reputation, but sometimes he has the faculty of "standing still" at critical moments in the game. A capital nurser, an excellent player of follows and cushion shots, he is nevertheless about as uncertain as any one of the lot. There seems to be a lurking idea in his mind that 300 points are too few; and yet in Chicago, where the games were 400 points up, he fared out poorly. He is full of ambition, and he is honest. There are not a few who predict he will be the victor. Mr. A. P. Rudolphe is known all over the world, for there is hardly a country in which he has not exhibited his skill, which is of no mean order. His game is a strong one, but his nature is irritable and excitable. He can, if he tries, make it unpleasantly warm for the greatest of experts. George Slosson is one of the purest of players. Although young in years he is old in experience. He has met the most skilled professionals and by his superior play gained for himself a strong position. His game has wonderfully improved in the last year, and he intends if possible to win the prize.

The arrangements of the tournament are well prepared. The games, of 300 points each, are to be played on a 5x10 Griffith & Co. table, with Delaney with cushions, balls of the regulation size. The games Monday night will be: First, the two Dions, second, Maurice Daly and A. P. Rudolphe. An amphitheatre of seats has been constructed so that all will have an equal chance to witness the contests. The front seats and the chairs on the stage are to be reserved for ladies. The sum of \$3,500 is offered in prizes, and as there are seven players it will require twenty-one games to decide who is the victor.

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