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XV. Sports,

by

Henry Harmon Neill.

Only within recent years have outdoor sports become a popular form of amusement in the United States, previous to that time baseball and trotting alone claimed attention. To-day, however, nearly every game familiar to Englishmen is played in the Eastern half of the country, and many are known throughout all the states. The growth has been so rapid that its postponement until the present generation now seems surprising. Perhaps the explanation is that in a new country outdoor labour is so general as to forbid outdoor play; or that Americans have until recently been too busy to amuse themselves except after sundown.

To enter into the spirit of American pastimes, an Englishman need only learn to admire the gait of the trotting horse and to admit the merits of base-ball as a substitute for cricket. All other sports are conducted substantially upon English models. The *Running Horses* (i.e. race-horses) are all of English blood, and the tracks are becoming annually more like those of Great Britain, straight and hilly courses replacing the level oval mile once universal; the *Yachts* are growing more substantial in build and more English in model; *Football* as played in the States is a modification of the Rugby game; *Lawn Tennis, Cricket, Lacrosse, Golf,* and *Polo* are played in the same way in both countries; while *Rowing* and *Canoeing* are equally popular on each side of the Atlantic.

Though the theory that *Base-ball* is a development of '*Rounders*' is vehemently disputed, the '*National Game*' is easily understood by anyone familiar with the old English pastime. It is played in every village, town, and city, and by every school, college, university, and athletic club in the country; but the games most worth seeing are those of the (professional) *National League*, in New York, Boston, Brooklyn, Cincinnati, Chicago, Washington, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, St. Louis, Baltimore, Cleveland, and Louisville. The club 'representing' each of these cities plays a series of home and home games with every other; the winner of the greatest number is the champion of the year. Minor '*Leagues*' are the *Eastern, Atlantic,* and *Western*, with clubs in the smaller cities. The best amateur games are those of the colleges (especially *Harvard, Yale, Pennsylvania, Princeton, Georgetown,* and *Cornell*) and of the larger athletic clubs. The season begins in May and ends in October. A base-ball team consists of nine men, including the pitcher, catcher, and seven fielders. Large salaries (sometimes \$10,000 a year) are paid to the best professional players, and the game is the vehicle of a considerable amount of betting in the western states.

Horse Races. See p. 17 under New York. Other meetings are held during the season in or near Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Louisville, New Orleans, Washington, Saratoga, and elsewhere; but the racing there is not very good.

Trotting Races take place during the season, from May to Sept., on 1500 tracks in the United States owned by as many associations, and at all county and state fairs as well as on many private tracks at brood-farms and elsewhere. Stakes, purses, and added moneys amount to more than \$3,000,000 annually; and the capital invested in horses, tracks, stables, farms, etc., is enormous. The tracks are level, with start and

finish directly in front of the grand stand, and are either 1 M. or $\frac{1}{2}$ M. in length. They are always of earth, and are usually elliptical in shape, though the 'kite-shaped track' was for a time popular for its increased speed. In this there is one straight stretch of $\frac{1}{3}$ M., then a wide turn of $\frac{1}{3}$ M., and then a straight run of $\frac{1}{3}$ M. back to the start and finish. The horses are driven in two-wheeled 'sulkies' of little weight, and the handicapping is exclusively by time-classes. Records of every race are kept by two national associations. Horses that have never trotted a mile in less than 2 min. 40 secs. are in one class; those that have never beaten 2.35 in another; those that have never beaten 2.30 in a third; and so on down to 2.5, which has been beaten but a dozen times. Races are always trotted in heats, and the winner must win three heats. With a dozen entries (or even six or eight, the more usual number) a race may thus occupy an entire afternoon, and require many heats before a decision is reached. Betting is common at every meeting, but is not so prominent as at running tracks. The best trotting races are to be seen at the tracks of the 'Grand Circuit' and the 'Western Southern Circuit'. These give meetings, of from four to eight days each, in or near New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Cleveland, Buffalo, Rochester, Springfield, and Hartford in the Eastern States, and at Sturgis (Mich.), Grand Rapids (Mich.), Chicago (Ill.), Independence (Iowa), Fort Wayne (Ind.), Cambridge City (Ind.), Terre Haute (Ind.), St. Louis (Mo.), Nashville (Tenn.), and Columbia (Tenn.). — The best brood-farms for the development of trotting horses are in Kentucky and California. Each farm has an annual auction-sale of its produce, either at home or in New York City. At the stables of Mr. Robert Bonner in New York City are some of the fastest trotters in the world; they may be seen upon application to the owner by letter.

Hunting is much in vogue in the neighbourhood of New York, though the place of a fox is generally taken by a 'drag'. There are frequent meets with one of the packs of *Meadow Brook*, *Rockaway*, *Orange*, or *White Plains*. Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington also support packs. The wild fox is hunted in the *Genesee Valley* (N. Y.) and at *Media* (Pa.). Near the cities the sport is indulged in mainly by active business men who cannot spare more than an afternoon for it.

Shooting and Fishing are generally free to all-comers during the legal season, though the number of game and fish-preserves is increasing. The *Game Laws* are different in each of the States and Territories, and cannot be condensed. The periodical 'Fur, Fin, and Feather' (111 Warren St., New York City), contains them all, with the latest amendments.

Of the 33,000 sq. M. in the state of *Maine* more than one-half is an almost uninhabited wilderness of forest. Here are 1500 lakes, thousands of streams and rivulets, and miles upon miles of hunting-grounds, where the sportsman may find large game and small and fishing and shooting of almost all kinds. His visit should be made not earlier than the middle of July, when the black fly has passed, and should continue until after the first of October, when the open season for deer, caribou, and moose begins. By law he may fish in fresh water from May to Sept inclusive, and hunt from Oct. to Dec. inclusive, the greater sport being permitted from the day the quieter ceases. Bears, foxes, wild-cats, and wolves he may kill at any time, and opportunities for doing so are not unlikely to occur. Ducks, geese, loons, and herons abound; and small game of every kind is common. The region may be entered at *Greenville*, on *Moosehead Lake* (p. 110), the largest sheet of water in the State. Here guides may be obtained at \$3 per day, who furnish canoes, cooking utensils, and tents. It is best, of course, to camp out. For this, one guide is required for each visitor; food will cost about \$1 per day, and other equipment may be purchased beforehand, or hired at *Greenville* or any other point selected for entering the woods. A good rifle, a pole (fishing-rod), lines, flies, reels, stout boots, and plenty of blankets — these are the necessities, and beyond these one may take an outfit as complete or as modest as desired. Care should be taken in the selection of guides. In July and Aug. it is not easy to get good ones. A party of four, with four or five guides, is as large as is desirable.

The *Rangely Lakes* (p. 119) are more accessible than Greenville, but the sport there is not so good; the wilderness, however, may be penetrated in canoes from either point for hundreds of miles, with increasing chances of game.

The *Adirondack Region* (p. 183) has a smaller area than the Maine wilderness, and the shooting is not so good. Deer may be met with, however, the open season lasting from Aug. 15th to Nov. 1st. But although large hotels, steam-launches, and even railroads are now found throughout the Adirondacks, the trout-fishing is still excellent. The season lasts from May 1st to Sept. 15th. A large part of the region is owned by the State and reserved as a public park. August is the best month for a visit; and the sportsman may go directly to one of the hotels in the region, relying upon the guides, provisions, and equipments there to be found.

There is also good hunting in the mountains of Pennsylvania, the Virginias, Tennessee, and North Carolina; and in the Far West the biggest game is found. Deer are abundant, too, in Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, and Alabama, and venison has within recent years been cheaper than beef in the markets of New Orleans. But the limits of this article forbid more than a mention of these facts.

Wild Fowl abound on the coast from Maine to Florida; the season for duck, etc., usually opens about Sept. 1st and continues to April.

Tarpon Fishing in the deep-sea water off Florida, best from Feb to May, is a superb sport (comp. p. 397).

Buffaloes are nearly extinct. There are not over 1000 on the continent; of these 500 are in Yellowstone Park, where the sound of a gun is never heard. Another herd is preserved in the Corbin Park, New Hampshire (p. 129).

The *Mountain Sheep* and *Rocky Mountain Goat*, in the Far West, are generally protected by law from Jan to Sept.; in some states they cannot be legally killed at all.

Bicycling. The roads in the United States are not good, except near large cities and in a few eastern counties. They are, however, constantly being improved, and long tours, even across the continent, are now often made. The *League of American Wheelmen*, with over 100,000 members and divisions in every State, is doing what it can to improve the country roads, and its great influence gives hope of success. Already by political action, it has secured for the wheelman many rights formerly denied him, including the freedom of public parks, in almost all cities, on an equality with other vehicles. Clubs exist in every city. Annual race-meetings are held in each State during the riding season; and other meetings are not infrequent. Chief among the latter is the annual 'Wheel about the Hub' (third Frid., Sat., & Sun. in Sept.) of the *Boston Bicycle Club* (the oldest in America, dating from 1878). The *Cyclists' Touring Club* of England is represented in the United States by a Chief Consul at Boston (Mr. Frank W. Weston, Savin Hill, Dorchester) and Consuls in many towns and cities; and manufacturers or dealers, from whom information may be sought and wheels hired, are to be found in almost every town.

Lawn Tennis. The annual *All-comers Tournament* is held at Newport in August; the winner plays the champion of the year before for the championship at singles. A *Western Championship Tournament* at doubles occurs in Chicago in July, and an *Eastern* in New York, Philadelphia, or near Boston; the winners of these meet at Newport. The *Ladies Championships* are decided in Philadelphia. All these are open to members of recognized clubs, American or foreign. There are many minor tournaments during the season (May to Oct), usually open to strangers. A *Tropical Championship Tournament* is held in St. Augustine, Florida, during the winter. The *National Association* is the governing body, and there are clubs and courts in every city.

Cricket. The best clubs are in Philadelphia (see p. 231); in New York and Chicago a few Englishmen play, and some of the colleges have elevens. The game, however, has never secured a good foothold, being generally considered too Alexandrine as compared with base-ball.