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Games and Gaming of the Stuart Aristocracy

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GAMES AND GAMING OF THE
STUART ARISTOCRACY

by

Vicky Ann Sanderlin
B.A. May 1977, Old Dominion University

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the
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MASTER OF ARTS

HISTORY

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
May 1981

~~/ Approved by:~~

~~Douglas G. Greene, Director~~

ABSTRACT

GAMES AND GAMING OF THE STUART ARISTOCRACY

Vicky Ann Sanderlin
Old Dominion University, 1981
Director: Dr. Douglas G. Greene

Games and gaming provide insight into the lives of the people of the past. This thesis analyzes the games and gaming patterns of the aristocracy of Stuart England. This examination of gaming concentrates on the place of leisure games in the world of the elite. The study focuses on games suitable for inclement weather and includes both children's and adult's games from the period.

This thesis addresses three basic questions: 1) who were the gamesters, 2) when and where did they game, and 3) what games did they play and how did they play them? Answers to these questions have provided clues to several aspects of seventeenth century gaming in England. Traditional and customary gaming, regulation of gaming, professionalism in gaming, and the expansion of gaming locales and the intensity and frequency of play are prominent patterns which are investigated in this thesis. The study also provides a catalogue of the most popular games during the Stuart era. The rules, notable players, and history of the games are delineated.

Finally, the social context of Stuart England is examined as it relates to gaming. The political, economic,

religious, and social turmoil of the era which includes the Civil Wars, the Restoration, and the Glorious Revolution, forms the background for an investigation of the gaming of the Stuart aristocracy. The conclusion is that leisure time use is directly keyed to the rapidly changing world of Stuart England.

To My Parents:

Priscilla Ann Donna Sanderlin
James Allen Sanderlin, Sr.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES v

LIST OF PLATES vi

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. GAMING IN STUART ENGLAND 10

III. STUART GAMESTERS 48

VI. GAMING LOCALES 81

V. ADULT GAMES IN STUART ENGLAND:
BILLIARDS, BOARD GAMES, BOWLING,
TENNIS AND TRADITIONAL GAMES 112

VI. ADULT GAMES IN STUART ENGLAND:
CARDS, DICING AND GAMBLING GAMES 168

VII. CHILDREN'S GAMES AND GAMING
IN STUART ENGLAND 216

VIII. CONCLUSION 240

BIBLIOGRAPHY 250

APPENDIXES 263

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
I. Sedentary Games	131

LIST OF PLATES

PLATE	PAGE
I. A Gambling Scene	39
II. John Locke	77
III. The Gaming Room of an Ordinary	93
IV. Robert Dover's Cotswald Games	107
V. Playing Bowls	144
VI. At the Tennis Court	161
VII. Gaming at Cards	196
VIII. Children's Pastimes	234

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Gaming, a significant component of life in modern Western society, has been neglected as a subject for analysis despite the attention it has received from psychologists, sociologists and educators. Gaming has been an unexamined and scarcely acknowledged tributary to history's mainstream. Recently, however, several aspects of gaming, recreation and leisure have been explored by social historians. A new breed of historian has acknowledged gaming and recreating to be significant components of social experience, whose history is important in reconstructing the life of people of the past. Such scholars seek to understand gaming and recreating not in isolation but in relation to the society as a whole and its patterns of social change.

Knowledge of traditional or pre-industrial leisure and gaming in Stuart England has been enhanced by the work of Joseph Strutt in 1801. In his work The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, Strutt advanced the view that a nation's games and recreations are a gauge of its people's character. Strutt stated that a

people's true state and natural disposition were revealed when they gamed.¹ Modern historians such as Christina Hole in English Sports and Pastimes (1949) and Dennis Brailsford in Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne (1969) have echoed Strutt's sentiments. In their works which examine the ritualistic popular sports and pastimes of all the elements of Stuart culture, they concentrate on the full range of sports played by the ordinary people of Stuart England. Much of the focus centers on rural community life and the relation of gaming and sports to the calendar with its festivals and holidays. Hole and Brailsford deal with the institutions of a predominantly conservative society and the gaming of the relatively stable agricultural masses. They do not provide an account of the gaming and recreations pursued by the aristocrats and members of the upper gentry who compromised the elite in Stuart England, and who often resided in London or at the court where the gaming and social life was more diverse and volatile.

¹Joseph Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England From the Earliest Period, Including the Rural and Domestic Recreations May Games, Mummeries, Pageants, Processions and Pompous Spectacles, edited by Charles Cox (1803: London: Methuen & Co., 1903; reprint ed., Detroit: Singing Tree Press, 1968), p. 15.

Modern social historians like Lawrence Stone and Peter Laslett have attempted to sketch and define the elite of Stuart England. In Stuart society this elite owned most of the wealth, wielded most of the power and made the important political, economic and social decisions. In their influence, the Stuart aristocrats exercised power disproportionate to their numbers. Only four or five percent of the people of Stuart England ranked gentry or above in the social hierarchy.² In Stuart England's two-class society it was the elite who directed the complex changes that overtook English society in the seventeenth century and altered the old pattern of recreation and gaming.

The Puritan movement, the growth of cities, the turmoil of the Civil Wars, the end of the Divine Right monarchy and the assertion of the doctrine of individualism generated ruling class instability that altered the gaming and leisure of the Stuart elite. New routes to eliteness opened as rising capitalism awarded social status on the basis of monetary considerations. Stone argues that the fierce competition for wealth and social status resulted in an opulent and luxuriant lifestyle in which work and leisure gaming became more intertwined in the daily round

²Peter Laslett, The World We Have Lost: England Before the Industrial Age, 2nd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 27.

of activities.³ The growth of gaming in seventeenth-century England was encouraged by several factors. These include a decline in material constraints and social prohibitions and the enactment of legislation which deliberately promoted gaming as a source of revenue. Moreover the growth of the professional gamblers, an increase in female gamblers, the expansion of gaming locales and the commercialization of gaming for both children and adults are likewise evident in the study of the gaming patterns of the elite in Stuart society.

The present study analyzes the growth and decline of gaming as a source of tension as well as gratification for the members of the aristocracy and gentry in Stuart England. It also examines alterations in the gaming habits of the Stuart elite brought about by interaction between various social groups. Continuity as well as change is evidenced in the role of the critics of gaming most notably the Puritans who sought to shape the gaming morality of the elite through oral and literary appeals

³ See Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 42-50 and pp. 547-581. In this work, Stone argues that the lavish lifestyle adopted by the elite prior to the Civil Wars accounted for a drain on their monetary resources and a decline in their status and prestige. These factors accounted for their defeat in the wars as the gentry rose at the expense of the aristocracy. This thesis argues that at the upper levels of the gentry the two groups were intertwined.

and legal regulations. Consideration is given the reform ideal in relation to the actual experience and significance of gaming in the lives of the upper class in general.

After surveying such areas of gaming as regulations, gamesters, gaming locales and traditions and customs, this study examines specific adult and children's games and recreations. Thus the origins, rules and implements of a wide variety of games are explored and detailed. Knowing the rules and techniques of playing a game can aid in clarifying the motive for engaging in it. The prominent players and the popularity of the game as evidenced in literary sources are also described. Specific types of games often reveal social and psychological characteristics like insecurity, aggression or status-seeking - all important ingredients in the personalities and lifestyles of the elite of Stuart England. The list of games described, however, is not meant to be a comprehensive catalogue of the games of the period. It is intended to fill the void in previous studies which have given only partial treatment to Stuart gaming.

The term "game" is one that easily evokes an image, but not a definition. Throughout this thesis I have endeavored to utilize the psychologist's and sociologist's more specific definition of the word. According to these

social scientists, a game consists of six basic components.

1. Games are free and play is not obligatory. Games are a diversion.⁴
2. Playing games is a separate occupation circumscribed within limits of space and time, defined and fixed in advance. Games are finite in that one must be finished within a time limit. Time can also be allotted to each player with a penalty defined if the deadline is not met.⁵
3. The course of a game is uncertain; it cannot be determined nor the result attained beforehand. There is some latitude for innovations which are left to the player's initiative. A player usually takes the initiative to deploy the resources to his best advantage. He uses his strategy or "set of instruction... to select each move, ... taking into account the knowledge he will have with him each time he makes his move."⁶
4. Games are unproductive; no goods, or wealth, or new element is produced. An exchange of property among the players may occur. Most games are zero-sum games in which the winnings

⁴Roger Caillois, Man, Play, and Games, Trans. Meyer Barash (New York: The Free Press, 1961), p. 9.

⁵Caillois, Man, Play, and Games, pp. 6-9 and J. D. Williams, The Compleat Strategyst (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1954), p. 17 and Martin Shubik, ed., Game Theory and Related Approaches to Social Behavior (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1964), p. 28.

⁶Caillois, Man, Play and Games, p. 9 and K. C. Bowen, Research Games: An Approach to the Study of Decision Processes, With contributions by Janet I. Harris (London: Taylor and Frances, 1978), p. 4 and Shubik, Game Theory and Related Approaches to Social Behavior, p. 12.

of one player are directly proportionate to the losings of the other players.⁷

5. Games are governed by rules. Some games are free-form, in which the rules are made up as one goes along. Other games have rigid rules. Rules of the game control the use of resources and the interactions of players. Rules of a game suspend ordinary laws and for the moment establish new legislation which players must obey. Even the player who cheats will not destroy a game because even as the player violates the rules, he at least pretends to respect them as he takes advantage of other player's loyalty to the rules.⁸
6. Gaming creates a world of make-believe. This is accompanied by a special awareness of a second reality.⁹

Motivations for gaming have also been discussed and analyzed by social scientists. One can assume that if gaming has been inherent in all cultures, the motivations for gaming have also remained constant. According to the modern scholar, Roger Caillois, in any era games reflect:

1. a need to prove one's superiority,
2. a desire to change, make a record, or merely overcome an obstacle,

⁷Caillois, Man, Play, and Games, p. 9 and Shubik, Game Theory and Related Approaches to Social Behavior, p. 18.

⁸Shubik, Game Theory and Related Approaches to Social Behavior, p. 12 and Caillois, Man, Play, and Games, pp. 7-9.

⁹Caillois, Man, Play, and Games, p. 9.

3. the hope for and the pursuit of the favor of destiny,
4. the pleasure in secrecy, make-believe or disguise,
5. the joy of improvising, inventing, or varying solutions,
6. the desire to test one's strength, skill, endurance, or ingenuity,
7. the desire to solve a mystery or riddle,
8. the duty of respect rules and laws and at the same time the temptation to circumvent them.¹⁰

Any or all of these motivations may have applied to the upper-class gamesters in Stuart England.

Source material for the study of Stuart gaming is plentiful but diffuse. The increase in literacy and writing in the Stuart era makes an examination of games and recreating possible. Gaming as a topic for comment was often incidental to other issues in the writings of the Stuarts. Contemporary works which elucidated the popular games or described particularly noteworthy gamesters like Charles Cotton's The Compleat Gamester (1674) or Theophilus Lucas' Lives of the Gamesters (1714) were particularly helpful. Yet, there is no single major compendium of documents which examines gaming, recreation and leisure. It has been necessary, therefore, to sift through an extensive sampling of Stuart literature, contemporary

¹⁰Ibid., p. 65.

works of social commentary, memoirs, diaries, Calendar of State papers and other primary materials. In addition, periodicals, social histories, gaming manuals, and those works like Hole's or Brailsford's which deal directly with the topic in some fashion have provided information on the cultural peculiarities of the upper-class Stuart gamesters. On occasion I have let the Stuarts speak for themselves in an attempt to catch the authentic voice of the past. In all, I have found the gaming of the aristocratic and gentry gamester in Stuart England to be a window through which to view his complex life.

"For variety of divertisements,
sports and recreations, no nation
doth excel the English."
-Edward Chamberlayne*

CHAPTER II

GAMING IN STUART ENGLAND

The seventeenth-century in England was a period of profound tension and turmoil in political, religious, economic and social matters. The death of the Tudor queen, Elizabeth, in 1603 assured the accession of the Scottish Stuarts to the throne of England. The Stuarts reigned until 1714. The modern historian J. P. Kenyon argues that the Stuarts lacked good counsel, a powerful foreign ally as a friend, an adequate supply of money (a condition which was aggravated by their personal extravagances), a standing army, and good luck.¹

Political turmoil and the role of Parliament is central to any discussion of the Stuart era. It was the breakdown of agreement and cooperation with Parliament

* A. F. Scott, ed., Every One a Witness: The Stuart Age; Commentaries of an Era (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1974), p. 133.

¹J. P. Kenyon, Stuart England (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), pp. 42-44.

which worried the early Stuart monarchs, James I and Charles I. Parliament was not representative of the entire nation; the franchise was exercised by an elite who guaranteed the election of their own members. The early Stuart era was in fact an age of political conservatism which lasted into the Civil Wars and resurfaced with the Restoration and return to the status quo which negated most of the English Revolution. Parliament survived because of its regulation of taxation, a privilege that the Crown never seriously challenged. The Stuart monarchy was weak and disorganized, but Parliament was even more so and the Crown after 1688 proved to be unexpectedly powerful and independent.² This was true despite the overthrow of the divine right monarchy, the rejection of the doctrine of passive obedience, the granting of limited religious toleration and the passage of the Bill of Rights.³

Throughout this controversy the element of continuity or control in Stuart England was the elite in the House of Lords.⁴ Even during the Commonwealth when the House of

² Ibid., pp. 33-38 and pp. 353-354.

³ Lawrence Stone, The Family Sex and Marriage in England: 1500-1800 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977), p. 407.

⁴ Kenyon, Stuart England, p. 354.

Lords was abolished, the peers as a status group remained unaffected by the change in politics. Some went into exile with the Royalists and others went on living in their great country estates, enjoying their social and other privileges. Cromwell's government continued to address the peers by their titles, which illustrates the extent to which their order existed independent of the House of Lords.⁵ Under the later Stuarts, the elite claimed a monopoly on national leadership. They were responsible for the Glorious Revolution of 1688 which resulted in an aristocratic not parliamentary monarchy by the end of the Stuart regime.⁶

Religious tension in the seventeenth century was keyed to political turmoil. Puritanism has often been allied by historians with the causes of the Great Rebellion. Puritan was an elusive term even in the seventeenth century because the Puritans encompassed a wide variety of religious non-conformists, including Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Separatists, and those Anglicans who sought

⁵Peter Laslett, The World We Have Lost: England Before the Industrial Age, p. 42.

⁶Kenyon, Stuart England, pp. 355-356.

greater reform of the church than the Crown would permit.⁷ According to Kenyon, the problem was really a dispute over the nature of the English church, its teaching, its ministry and its government. Once the Puritans had control they were unable to agree on the nature of religious reform, and their collapse with the Restoration in 1660 indicates the largely apolitical nature of the movement.⁸

Religious and political turmoil in Stuart England was augmented by changes in the economy of the seventeenth century. The economic arrangements of the pre-industrial world of Stuart England were exploitative and oppressive. The economic order of early Stuart society was felt to be eternal and unchangeable by those who supported and enjoyed

⁷J. Thomas Jable, "English Puritans - Suppressors of Sport and Amusement?" Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education, vol. 7 (May 1976): 34, and Christopher Hill, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), pp. 24-25. Hill described Puritans as the "industrious sort of people". These people were economically independent from the aristocrats and crown. They were drawn from the ranks of yeomen, small merchants, artisans, householders and a portion of the gentry, namely magistrates and common lawyers. Puritanism relied on a Calvinist tradition, strict moral standards, hard work and God's grace and salvation to assure their success in the world. Because the aristocrats of Stuart England indulged in gaming and leisure pursuits at the expense of work many Puritans believed that the aristocrat needed reforming.

⁸Kenyon, Stuart England, pp. 22-23.

it.⁹ Bad harvests, the control over trade by the Merchant Adventurers and the glids dictated that the economic state of England from 1590 to 1650 was one of depression and underemployment with an occasional mild boom.¹⁰ The exceptions to this prostrate economic state could be found in London.

London possessed a disproportionate percentage of the population, and as a center of mass consumption it absorbed a significant porportion of the nation's agricultural products and it stimulated industries such as coal mining in the northeast. The growth of London, however, could not absorb England's rapidly expanding population. The problem of over-population was emphasized by the parallel problem of chronic inflation. All over Europe from about 1530 to 1650 the real value of money fell in proportion to prices.¹¹

The aristocracy and gentry of Tudor and Stuart England utilized a number of methods to combat the price revolution. Tactics employed included increasing the scale of capital investment, developing colonial enterprises, investing

⁹Laslett, The World We Have Lost: England Before the Industrial Age, p. 4.

¹⁰Kenyon, Stuart England, pp. 14-17, and Laslett, The World We Have Lost: England Before the Industrial Age, p. 33.

¹¹Kenyon, Stuart England, pp. 14-17.

for profit accumulation, adopting modern business methods like good bookkeeping, introducing new industries especially mineral extractions and the developing of metals and finally, a further elaboration of the division of labor in the crafts as the guilds eventually declined after the Restoration.¹² The new capitalistic methods of combating a depressive economy were successful and after the Restoration, this was an age of almost unequalled material progress so that by the end of the Stuart era England was one of the wealthiest nations in the world, with an expanding maritime and colonial empire.¹³

In the seventeenth century, wealth was acknowledged as a source of power and the new agricultural capitalists used their money to invest in land.¹⁴ The members of the elite were seeking security and status through the purchase of a landed estate.¹⁵ Economic instability corresponded with social upheaval in Stuart England. As wealth became a key to status social mobility was enhanced. This

¹² Lawrence Stone, Social Change and Revolution in England: 1540-1640 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1965), pp. 49-60.

¹³ Kenyon, Stuart England, p. 352.

¹⁴ Lawrence Stone, Social Change and Revolution in Stuart England: 1540-1640, pp. 10-13 and pp. 49-51.

¹⁵ Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641, pp. 189-198.

mobility was noted and accepted by contemporaries although the scale of movement was small and people were going downwards as well as upwards.¹⁶

The struggle for social status in Stuart England was compounded by the inflation of honours and the sale of titles by the crown.¹⁷ Both aristocrats and members of the gentry competed for these titles.¹⁸ The two groups were often intermarried as they shared the same problems, institutions, conventions and tastes.¹⁹ The willingness of the College of Heralds to issue pedigrees, real or imaginary, for landed families reflected the desire of the elite to make their mobility respectable.²⁰ It was important that one gave the impression of permanence.²¹

Financial independence and the capacity to live fully on rural estates, at court, or in London all reflected the

¹⁶ Laslett, The World We Have Lost: England before the Industrial Age, pp. 14-15.

¹⁷ Lawrence Stone, Social Change and Revolution in England: 1540-1640, p. 67 and The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1580-1640, pp. 185-187.

¹⁸ Lawrence Stone, Social Change and Revolution in England: 1540-1640, p. 30.

¹⁹ Kupper, Stuart England, p. 19 and Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1580-1640, p. 65.

²⁰ Laslett, The World We Have Lost: England before the Industrial Age, p. 9.

desire of long-established elite families to defend their status and the newly risen families to cement their claims.²¹ In seventeenth-century England status depended upon ever-renewed success; to stagnate was to fall back.²² The fluidity of social status also allowed the rise of individualism, and by the end of the Stuart period a man's function not honorifics could qualify him for gentry status.²³

As outlined above, the religious, political, economic and social tensions of the era were reflected in the gaming practices of the Stuart elite. The fact that this was a period of sociability and gaming for the aristocrats of England is evidenced by the frequent references to gaming in Stuart literature. The allusions to gaming take different forms. The dramatist or writer may give a description of the game; the name of the game or some term used in connection with the playing of it. The game also may be cited in the form of a figure of speech, usually as a simile or metaphor.

²¹ Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1588-1641, p. 54, p. 58 and pp. 185-187.

²² Kenyon, Stuart England, p. 21.

²³ Lawrence Stone, Social Change and Revolution in England: 1540-1640, p. 58 and Laslett, The World We Have Lost: England Before the Industrial Age, p. 46.

Stuart noblemen and gentry also supported literature or drama which used gaming as a theme and gamblers as central characters. Authors of the period illuminated the games and gaming habits of the aristocrats in plays like Middleton's A Game at Chess or Shirley's drama The Gamester. As gaming increased dramatists in the latter half of the seventeenth century continued to produce popular plays with a gaming theme: The Basset-Table by Mrs. Centlivre is an example. The Restoration playwrights were joined by novelists like Richard Head who made a gambler his hero in the book, The Rogues.

Others who profited from the love of gaming in the Stuart era included those who wrote about games and gaming itself. Under the Stuarts these authors included those explained the rules of games, described cheating techniques and listed the tactics of rogues. For example, one of the most popular books in the Tudor-Stuart era was Reginald Scot's The Discoverie of Witchcraft, which was issued in 1584, 1611 and 1645. In this book Scot described card and sleight-of-hand tricks including "how to tell what card he seeketh in the bottom, when the same card is shuffled into the pack."⁵⁶ Scot also warned his readers of the tactics

⁵⁶ Reginald Scot, The Discoverie of Witchcraft, edited with an introduction by Brinsley Nicholson (1584; reprint ed., Toronto, W. J.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1971), pp. 176-177.

employed by rooks to cheat wealthy gamblers.²⁵

The literature on gaming expanded throughout the seventeenth century in proportion to the frequency of gaming. After the Restoration a comprehensive compendium on gaming titled The Compleat Gamester was published by Charles Cotton in 1674. This work was reprinted frequently, and new editions were issued in 1674, 1676, 1680, 1709, 1721 and 1725. Cotton explained his work by saying:

It is not (I'll assure you) any private interest of my own that caus'd me to adventure on this subject, but the delight and benefit of every individual person; delight to such who will pass away their spare minutes in harmless recreation if not abus'd; and profit to all, who by inspecting all manner of games may observe the cheats and abuses, and so be arm'd against the injuries that may accrue thereby.

Cotton's work was followed by The Court Gamester, The Gamester's Companion and The Polite Gamester.²⁷ In 1711, Do No Right, Take No Wrong; Keep What You Have, Get What

²⁵ Ibid., p. 272.

²⁶ Charles Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, in Games and Gamesters of the Restoration: "The Compleat Gamester," by Charles Cotton, (1674) and "Lives of the Gamesters," by Theophilus Lucas (1714), ed. J. Isaacs, with an Introduction by Cyril Hughes Hartmann (London: George Routledge & Sons Ltd., 1936; reprint ed.), p. xxv.

²⁷ Catherine Perry Hargrave, A History of Playing Cards and a Bibliography of Cards and Gaming (New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 1966), p. 169.

You Can or The Way of The World Explained by S. H.

Misodolus was published. This volume, for the instruction of aristocratic gamblers, contained essays, a philosophical passage on gaming, a lexicon of a rook's vocabulary, and histories of ancient and modern gamblers, cheats and victims.²⁸ In the Augustan age, books which calculated the mathematical odds of various throws of the dice, or chances of a card being a trump were extremely popular with gamblers who wanted to retain or improve their estates.²⁹

Literary critics of gaming continued publishing throughout the Stuart century. Charles Morton wrote a pamphlet named Gaming to show that statistically gambling did not pay.³⁰ As late as 1693, John Locke was noting the wastefulness of gaming in Some Thoughts Concerning Education. This type of literature did not deter the aristocrats and upper gentry from continuing to enjoy their pastimes.

The popularity of gaming in the Stuart era is also manifested in the moralists and reformers who wrote about

²⁸W. W. McDowell, "A Cursory View of Cheating at Whist in the Eighteenth Century," Harvard Library Bulletin vol. 22 no. 2 (1974), p. 169.

²⁹Hargrave, A History of Playing Cards and a Bibliography of Cards and Gaming, p. 169.

³⁰Dennis Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 151-152.

the evils and inconveniences of gaming pastimes. One of the most popular works along these lines was John Northbrooke's treatise condemning dicing, card-playing and other idle pastimes. The popularity of this work inspired others, especially fellow Puritans, to publish tracts like A Lesson in Observing the Sabbath. On the left of the frontispiece were pictured "works of light" which included attending church, praying and reading the Bible. On the right side were depicted "works of darkness" in which people were dancing and playing cards.³¹

Although aristocrats and members of the gentry may have believed that their recreations were relatively harmless pastimes, there were many people in the early seventeenth century who disagreed. Collectively these people were labeled Puritans. The Puritans did not express any consensus on sport and amusement. Some favored absolute suppression while others allowed sports in moderation. Most rejected those games which involved gambling.³² The conflict between the Puritans and authorities over gaming mirrored the political and religious conflicts of the period.

³¹Maurice Ashley, The English Civil War: A Concise History (London: Thames & Hudson, 1974), pp. 36-37.

³²Jable, "English Puritans - Suppressors of Sport and Amusement?", p. 40.

A Puritan could object to gaming for any number of reasons. Games were a worldly indulgence which tempted men from the Godly life and in some instances, the games were rooted in pagan and popish practices which were rich in ceremony and poorly suited to the Protestant conscience.³³ The "vaine oathes which most commonly slip out unawares" and the excessive drinking which often accompanied gaming among Stuart aristocrats were also offensive to some Puritans.³⁴ Gaming was also reputed to disrupt the peaceable order of society and to distract men from their basic social and moral duties by breeding idleness.³⁵ Honest labor was a service to God and the time spent in gaming detracted from this service.³⁶ The Puritans also had a hatred of high living and the extravagance of the peers in

³³Robert W. Malcolmson, Popular Recreations in English Society: 1700-1850 (Cambridge, England: The University Press, 1973), p. 6. In medieval times, games were regarded as a snare and a product of the devil because they made one laugh, and humor was associated with demons. See Sydney Carter, "Sports and Pastimes," in Life Under the Stuarts, edited by J. E. Morpurgo, (London: Falcon Educational Books, 1950), p. 162.

³⁴John Ashton, The History of Gambling in England (Montclair, N. J.: Patterson Smith, 1969), p. 32 and Malcolmson, Popular Recreations in English Society: 1700-1850, p. 77.

³⁵Malcolmson, Popular Recreations in English Society: 1700-1850, pp. 6-10.

³⁶Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, p. 127.

gaming was one more reason for the decline of their prestige in the early seventeenth century.³⁷ From an economic standpoint gaming was unprofitable as men gamed away

. . . their houses, horses, clothes:
some all that ever they have, or can
borrow, . . . till all be gone: . . .
which causeth so many to come to
beggery, stealing, and finallye to
that untimely death of the gallowes.³⁸

Association with evil rooks was another reason why some Puritans shunned gamesters. Richard Baxter in his Autobiography thanked God for curing him of his inclination towards gaming which was a product of the Devil.³⁹ To the Puritans all things were ordered by God, and one was not to tempt fate by using lots (chance/gambling) to obtain something one had not worked for.⁴⁰

Finally, many Puritans objected to gaming on the Sabbath. On this day a man was not to recreate but to

³⁷ Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641, pp. 584-585.

³⁸ John Northbrooke, Spiritus est vicarius Christi in terra. A Treatise where in Dauncing, Vaine Playes or Enterluds with other idle pastimes &c. commonly bred on the Sabbath day, are reprovod by the Authoritie of the work of God and auintient writers, with Preface by Arthur Freeman (London: H. Bynneman, for George Byshop, 1579; reprint ed., Garland Publishing, Inc., 1974), p. 109.

³⁹ The Autobiography of Richard Baxter, ed. N. H. Keeble, abridged by J. M. Lloyd Thomas (Totowa, N. J.: Rowan & Littlefield, 1974), p. 14.

⁴⁰ Ashton, The History of Gambling in England, p. 31.

wrestle with God.⁴¹ Not every Puritan, however, adhered to this principle and Aubrey revealed that:

The Puritan faction did begin to increase in those dayes and especially at Enamuel College . . . They carried themselves ourwardly with great sanctity and strictnesse. They preached up very strict keeping and observing the Lord's day: made, upon the matter, damnation to breake it, and that 'twas less sin to kill a man. Yet these Hypocrites did bowle in a private green at their⁴²colledge every Sunday after Sermon

The increase in the Puritan faction and their prohibitions of games created a conflict between the Puritans and the crown which culminated in 1618 with The King's Majesty's Declaration to his Subjects Concerning Lawful Sports to be Used, or The Book of Sports as it was popularly called. (See Appendix I). This proclamation was issued after James I, while on a Progress, was petitioned by the lower classes in Lancashire to restore their customary sports and games, which the Puritan magistrates had denied them.⁴³ This legislation retained the gaming privileges of the nobility and gentry. For example, the

⁴¹Hill, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England, p. 174.

⁴²John Aubrey, Brief Lives, edited by Oliver Lawson Dick (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957), p. 6.

⁴³Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, pp. 101-102.

"meaner sort of people" were still prohibited from engaging in Bowls.⁴⁴

In actuality, James I was less concerned with popular pleasures than with lessening the political influence of the Puritans.⁴⁵ Many clergymen had strong objections to The Book of Sports and they refused to read it from the pulpit. Archbishop Abbot was forced by rebellious ministers to withdraw the order.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the issuance of The Book of Sports set the royal seal of approval on an anti-Puritan reaction which had been gathering for a number of years. Those whom the crown increasingly recognized as its opponents had become identified with a restrictive attitude towards games. By encouraging the gaming of aristocrats and the lower classes, The Book of Sports was a useful means of propaganda for the Royalists.⁴⁷

⁴⁴Social England Illustrated: A Collection of XVIIth Century Tracts, with an Introduction by Andrew Lang (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1903), The Book of Sports, pp. 311-314.

⁴⁵Antonia Fraser, King James: VI of Scotland, I of England (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), p. 182.

⁴⁶Hill, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England, pp. 199-200.

⁴⁷Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, pp. 102-107.

As the Puritans increased in the early seventeenth century, they began to use the legal machinery of government to control the gaming of the Stuart aristocrats. The first Parliament in the reign of Charles I passed a statute prohibiting unlawful exercises and pastimes on the Sabbath. Violaters were fined 3s. 4d. or placed for three hours in the stocks.⁴⁸ Charles I did not approve of the Puritan prohibitions, and in 1633, the crown reissued The Book of Sports. Charles I and the Anglican government believed that sedition would result if men were deprived of all their games and sports.⁴⁹

The Puritans, on the other hand, believed men would become seditious if gaming on the Sabbath continued.⁵⁰ John Milton stated that The Book of Sports was issued to ". . . prepare and supple us either for a foreign invasion or domestic oppression."⁵¹ Many Puritan ministers in 1633 refused once again to read The Book of Sports to their congregations and a few of these ministers were suspended.⁵²

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 40.

⁴⁹ The Book of Sports. See Appendix I.

⁵⁰ Jable, "English Puritans - Suppressors of Sport and Amusement?" p. 40.

⁵¹ Hill, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England, p. 67.

⁵² Ibid., p. 199.

The Puritans before the Civil Wars were largely unsuccessful in their prosecution of aristocratic gamblers. In the seventeenth century violations of gaming statutes and laws were handled in a number of ways. At the court discipline rested largely on the personal character of the king and his Earl Marshall. The Lord Steward maintained order and an aristocratic gambler who violated gaming regulations was imprisoned in the Marshalsea or in the Tower.⁵³

Outside of the royal court, unruly aristocratic gamblers were dealt with in the civil and ecclesiastical courts.⁵⁴ The existence of both lay and ecclesiastical courts created endless possibilities of counter-pleading.⁵⁵ Moreover, justices in the counties were drawn almost exclusively from the ranks of the gentlemen, and it was unlikely that they would convict their social superiors and members of the nobility.⁵⁶

⁵³Mary Coate, Social Life in Stuart England, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1971), pp. 76-77.

⁵⁴Malcolmson, Popular Recreations in English Society: 1700-1850, p. 5.

⁵⁵Hill, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England, p. 330.

⁵⁶Wallace Notestein, The English People on the Eve of Colonization: 1603-1630 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), pp. 212-213.

The Parliamentary victory over the Crown in the Civil Wars of the 1640's allowed the Puritans a chance to try to curb the excessive gaming of the Stuart aristocrats. The Puritans viewed England as a chosen nation. In order to remain a chosen people, the Puritans had to insure the continuance of the true religion by purging the citizens of the Commonwealth of their gaming corruptions.⁵⁷ Many Puritans believed that legislation was the key to curing the evils of gaming, and more frequent attempts to interfere directly in a subject's everyday life resulted from a belief that each man was his brother's keeper.⁵⁸

One of the first acts of the Puritan Commonwealth was to ban The Book of Sports and to prohibit gaming on the Sabbath.⁵⁹ In 1644, the House of Commons banned Christmas and of course the Twelfth Night revels. Cards and dice were forbidden in alehouses and men could not spend more

⁵⁷ Marvin Arthur Breslow, A Mirror of England: English Puritan Views of Foreign Nations 1618-1640 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1970), pp. 141-142.

⁵⁸ Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, pp. 100-101 and Godfrey Davies, The Early Stuarts: 1603-1660 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 304-305.

⁵⁹ Frank W. Jessup, Background to the English Civil War (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1966), p. 18.

than an hour in these establishments.⁶⁰ The Puritans also attempted to curb the betting at cards, dice, tables, tennis and so forth by ordering gamesters to forfeit twice their winnings.⁶¹ During the Protectorate, aristocratic gamesters who swore while recreating were fined according to their rank.⁶² Female gamesters were fined according to their husband's rank and the fines were doubled for a second offense.⁶³ The frequent reissuance of legal prohibitions, however, is a sign that they were consistently being broken.

As noted, the Puritans could not agree among themselves as to how gaming and games should be regulated. Bills in Parliament such as, "A Bill for Punishing such Persons as Live at High Rates, and have no Visible Estates, Profession, or Calling, Answerable thereunto," caused

⁶⁰Carter, "Sports and Pastimes," p. 161, and Notestein, The English People on the Eve of Colonization: 1603-1630, p. 154.

⁶¹H. D. Traill and J. S. Mann, eds. Social England: A Record of the Progress of the People in Religion, Laws, Learning, Arts, Industry, Commerce, Science, Literature and Manners, from the Earliest Times to the Present Day, 1603-1714, 6 vols. (London: Cassell & Co., Ltd., 1901), 6:431.

⁶²Elizabeth Burton, The Jacobeans at Home (London: Secker & Warberg, 1962), pp. 294-295.

⁶³Godfrey Davies, The Early Stuarts: 1603-1660, 2nd ed. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 306-307.

heated debates over whether such measures could be effective against professional gamblers.⁶⁴

The Puritans did agree, however, that some type of gaming was a necessary component of life and they established the second Tuesday of the month as a day for "recreation and relaxation."⁶⁵ During the Protectorate a number of games such as Tennis and Chess were allowed to continue, and the aristocrats indulged in their own games on their private estates.⁶⁶

The Restoration of the Stuarts to the throne of England marked a return of an aristocratic court and its gaming pastimes. The Puritans had failed in their attempts legally to control the gaming of the aristocrats because the Puritans themselves were a minority movement and the aristocrats had custom and tradition on their side.⁶⁷ Old

⁶⁴Diary of Thomas Burton, Esquire, Member in the Parliaments of Oliver and Richard Cromwell from 1656 to 1659 with an Introduction, containing an Account of the Parliament of 1654 from the Journal of Guibon Goddard, Esquire, Member of Parliament, ed. John Towill Rutt, 4 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1828; reprint ed., Ann Arbor: Microfilm International, 1978), 2:229.

⁶⁵Hill, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England, pp. 197-198.

⁶⁶Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, pp. 137-139.

⁶⁷Malcolmson, Popular Recreations in English Society: 1700-1850, pp. 13-14.

customs such as Twelfth Night revels and May Day gaming were once again implemented.⁶⁸ Gaming even resumed on Sundays; Pepys recorded:

This evening, going to the Queen's side to see the ladies, I did find the Queene, the Duchess of Yorke, and another or two at Cards, with the room full of great ladies and men which I was amazed to see on a⁶⁹ Sunday, having not believed it

From the mid-seventeenth century until the end of the Stuart era, wealth and power became more concentrated in the hands of dynastic noble families.⁷⁰ The regulations of games after the Restoration grew up not from noble motives of "fair play" but to protect the financial investments of noble gamblers.⁷¹ As vast sums exchanged hands it was necessary for the aristocrats to insure that the money remained within the province of the crown and the social elite.

The aristocratic regulations of gaming under the Stuarts of the latter half of the seventeenth century were

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 30.

⁶⁹ The Diary of Samuel Pepys, eds., Robert Latham and William Matthews, 11 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971) 8:70, February 16, 1667.

⁷⁰ Charles M. Gray, Renaissance and Reformation England: 1509-1714 (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1973), pp. 174-175.

⁷¹ Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, p. 213.

manifested in two areas, the control of Lotteries and the duties on cards and dice. The Lotteries were profitable for the crown and the revenue generated from them was used to finance wars.⁷² The winners of the Lotteries were usually members of the gentry or nobility since the tickets issued were often priced out of the reach of many lower class Stuart subjects.⁷³ The duties on the implements of gaming were also used to finance wars and to generate revenue. The tax on cards and dice which forced an increase in their price made the purchasing of certain specialized decks of cards difficult for lower class gamesters.⁷⁴

An examination of some of the aforementioned customs and traditions of gaming in Stuart England together with social and economic factors in the seventeenth century provides a commentary on the life of a member of the aristocracy or gentry in this era. An examination of the gaming habits of Stuart aristocrats reveals that their recreations differed from those of their lowly counterparts.

⁷²See the Calendar of State Papers for the later Stuarts, especially the reigns of William and Mary and Anne.

⁷³John Ashton, Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne: Taken from Original Sources (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), p. 87.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 79-80.

This was true for a number of reasons.

The Stuart era marked a decline in the traditional militaristic functions of the nobility. The development of a bureaucratic structure dictated that offices were usually honorary and that noble estates could be left to a steward, so that the aristocrats were left with plenty of spare time.⁷⁵ The increased leisure time from their laboring to frequently engage in gaming activities like the elite.

To insure that the aristocrats of the period were entitled to their gaming pastimes, legislation was passed to prohibit certain games for the lower classes. The Book of Sports is one example. The legal control of gaming was a tradition in England before the Stuart era, and The Book of Sports often restated earlier statutes. For example, in the reign of Henry VIII, an Act was passed to forbid artificers, laborers, servants or apprentices from engaging in games of cards, dice or Bowls, except during the Christmas season.⁷⁶ In 1598, a statute was enacted to discourage idleness, drunkenness and unlawful games such as Bowls which interfered with agricultural or industrial

⁷⁵Notestein, The English People on the Eve of Colonization: 1603-1630, p. 39.

⁷⁶Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, p. 27.

improvements.⁷⁷ James I and Charles I relied on both these previous acts when they issued The Book of Sports. Legislation reinforced and guaranteed that the Stuart elite were entitled to their gaming pastimes.

As noted, the aristocrats of Stuart England retained a traditional and legal right to certain games. With these rights came certain responsibilities. A gentleman was expected to confine his gaming partners to those from the same social strata. It was not fitting for a gentleman to lose to someone of baser birth.⁷⁸ An aristocrat was also expected to set an example of good behavior and gaming habits for those beneath him. Many of the gamesters failed this attempt and they were chided for:

. . . their stout and strong abetting of so sille . . . vanities amongst hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of rude and vile persons, to whom they should give better, and not so bad example and encouragement, as to idle in neglecting their callings; wasteful in gameing and spending their meanes; wicked in cursing and swearing; and dangerously profane, in their brawling and quarreling.

⁷⁷Hill, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England, p. 125.

⁷⁸Lilly C. Stone, English Sports and Recreations (Washington, D. C.: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1960), p. 10.

⁷⁹Carl Bridenbaugh, Vexed and Troubled Englishmen: 1590-1642 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 116.

Exceptions to the mingling of aristocratic and lower class gamblers occurred on specific occasions which were sanctioned by custom. During Christmas, the aristocrats allowed their servants and laborers to use the gaming facilities in their homes. At the court, a room was opened for anyone who cared to wager his money against that of the members of the court.⁸⁰ The king usually led the gaming every Twelfth Night, and excessive bets were often allowed.⁸¹ This yearly meeting of the lower classes and the elite offended some like Samuel Pepys who deplored the mingling of "gentlemen of quality" and "dirty prentices and idle people."⁸² The tradition, however, continued throughout the Stuart era.

Royal authority also approved of the election of a "Lord of Misrule" at Christmas, who was selected by his peers to lead the Christmas games and pastimes. A Lord of Misrule was chosen at court, at the universities and in

⁸⁰Bridenbaugh, Vexed and Troubled Englishmen: 1590-1642, p. 114.

⁸¹Thomas Burke, English Night-Life from Norman Curfew to Present Blackout (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), p. 18.

⁸²Pepys, Diary, 9:2-3, January 1, 1668.

the private homes of noblemen and the gentry.⁸³

Aside from gaming at Christmas, in Stuart England Saints' Days and Sundays were sanctioned by custom and tradition for certain games such as Bowls and Tops. These pastimes, which wealthy and poor alike participated in, were often sources of revenue for parishes, and they were organized by the churchwardens for this purpose.⁸⁴ Church-ales, as these events were termed, were described by John Aubrey. In 1671 he wrote:

There were no rates for the poor in my grandfather's days: but for Kingston St. Michael (no small parish) the Church-Ale of Whitsuntide did the business. In every parish there is (or was) a church-house, to which belonged spits, crocks, etc., utensils for dressing provision. Here the house-keepers met and were merry, and gave their charity. The young people were there, too, and had dancing, bowling, shooting at butts, etc., the ancients sitting gravely by and looking on. All things civil and without scandal.⁸⁵

⁸³ Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 267 and The Diary of Sir Simonds D'Ewes: 1662-1624, ed. Elizabeth Bourcier, (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1974), pp. 48-49.

⁸⁴ Christina Hole, English Sports and Pastimes (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1949), pp. 5-6 and p. 99.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 101.

The occasional blending of the social classes at the Twelfth Night revels and at Church-Ales may have relieved social tensions. On these occasions gaming on a large scale was allowed, and the lower classes obtained an opportunity to better their social superiors at these events.

The genteel gamblers of Stuart England had not only leisure and the tradition of gaming, but they also possessed the capital to indulge in gaming on a large scale. They were responsible for the manufacture of gaming implements to cater to their lifestyles. Dice-makers, card-makers, and carpenters who provided the actual implements of gaming (such as dice, cards, backgammon boards, billiards tables and so forth) were assured of their livelihood as gaming increased in the Stuart century. In an age characterized by an under-employed labor force, the demand for luxuries including gaming implements contributed to those sectors of the Stuart economy which were showing undeniable growth. The upper-class demand for new and better standards of comfort and leisure also stimulated building projects and capital outlays. The phenomenal growth of London in the seventeenth century was due in part to its unique role as a center for luxury goods

and services.⁸⁶

Gaming house proprietors and alehouse and tavern-keepers throughout England were also the beneficiaries of the gaming habits of the Stuart aristocrats and gentry. In the latter half of the seventeenth century the owners of spas and racetracks outside of London also profitted as the amount of leisure time continued to increase and the Stuart aristocrats expanded their gaming to different locales.⁸⁷

The capital to indulge in gaming on a large scale also allowed the upper classes to speculate financially on the outcome of a game. This financial speculation was almost the norm among the elite in Stuart England. Exceptions to gambling on the results of a game did occur, and of course it was always possible to engage in a game merely for fun. Nevertheless, leisure games and other events such as births, deaths, the authorship of an anonymous tract, and various court intrigues were all opportunities for betting.

The love of gambling for high stakes was ingrained in Stuart Society. It was a habit that was formed with early conditioning as children engaged in gambling at an early

⁸⁶ Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641, p. 585.

⁸⁷ Bridenbaugh, Vexed and Troubled Englishmen: 1590-1642, p. 179.

Plate I.*

A GAMBLING SCENE

*Lucas, Lives of the Gamester's, p. 155.



age. As a child attained maturity and as the seventeenth century progressed the size of the stakes increased. In Jacobean England a noble gamester could win or lose as much as £450 in a single night.⁸⁸ During the Restoration the stakes were as high at £25,000 for a night of gaming.⁸⁹ Only the wealthy members of the aristocracy and gentry could afford such high stakes although it should be acknowledged that gambling while gaming was widespread throughout all the classes in Stuart England. Yet some of the most extravagant manifestations of gambling at leisure games occurred in the court circles.⁹⁰

The popularity of gambling while gaming was acknowledged and analyzed by Stuart contemporaries. Sir John Harington believed that gambling was a product of the triple vices of idleness, which creates boredom and thus a demand for relief; of pride, which makes men play for higher stakes than they can afford in order to give an impression of magnanimity and opulence; and of avarice, which feeds on hopes of making a killing.⁹¹ Harington was

⁸⁸E. S. Turner, The Court of St. James's (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1959), p. 120.

⁸⁹Pepys, Diary, 9:71

⁹⁰Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of Aristocracy: 1558-1641, pp. 571-572.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 568.

also convinced that status-seeking was the prime cause of the rise of gambling stakes.⁹² He realized that playing games and gambling on a large scale was glamorous and that any element of fun could quickly disappear from a game if the players were concerned with their reputations as game-players or the loss or gain of more than a trivial amount of money.⁹³ Harington proposed playing publicly for large sums of gold and silver, with a private agreement among the players that the accounts were to be settled at the rate of one shilling per one pound wagered.⁹⁴

Status-seeking and the desire to control Fate was also manifested in the Stuart century in the use of astrological omens and superstitions to assist Stuart gamesters in their gaming and gambling. Seventeenth-century astrologers like Arise Evans and William Lilly enjoyed a brisk business. The Stuart courtier could consult his astrologer to learn what day and hour in a given

⁹²Ibid., p. 571.

⁹³K. C. Bowen, Research Games: An Approach to the Study of Decision Processes, With contributions by Janet I. Harris. (London: Taylor and Francis, 1978), p. 28 and p. 76.

⁹⁴Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641, p. 571.

month would be the most fortunate.⁹⁵

The fortune-tellers and astrologers who frequented alehouses, taverns and coffee-houses were quick to recommend which course would be the most advantageous for a gamester. In 1675, Jordan penned this poem which supposedly depicted Lloyd's Coffehouse.

What Lilly or what Booker cou'd
By art not bring about
At Coffee-house you'll find a broad
Can quickly find it out.

They know who shall in times to come
Be either made or undone,
From great St. Peters' -street in Rome,
To Turnbal-street in London

They know all that is good or hurt,
To damn ye or to save ye;
There is the college and the court,
The country, camp, and navy.
So great an university,
I think there never was any,
In which you may a scholar be,
For spending of a penny.⁹⁶

In the seventeenth century, astrology, geomancy and palmistry had a recognized intellectual basis. Man's fate

⁹⁵ Don Cameron Allen, The Star-Crossed Renaissance: The Quarrel About Astrology and Its Influence in England (Durham: Duke University Press, 1941), p. 163.

⁹⁶ John Timbs, Clubs and Club Life in London: with Anecdotes of its Famous Coffehouses, Hostelries, and Taverns, from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Time (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1967), p. 99.

was governed by the same laws that ordered the motions of the universe.⁹⁷ Elias Ashmole recorded in his diary:

This night I played cards with ♄ and won every game/ I conceive it was by reason of the ♃'s going to the ♄ of ♄ and she [the moon] so strongly dignified.⁹⁸

Seventeenth-century gamblers also tried to insure their luck with precious stones and charms. Reginald Scot wrote in The Discoverie of Witchcraft: ". . . Amethyst maketh a drooken man sober, and refresth the wit. . . A Topase increaseth riches."⁹⁹ In Stuart England, a bit of hangman's rope was also supposed to ensure luck in gambling.¹⁰⁰

The seventeenth century belief in astrology as an aid to gaming reflected a preoccupation with the explanation and relief of human misfortune. A reliance upon astrologers and fortune-tellers reflected the hazards of an insecure environment which in seventeenth-century England was

⁹⁷ Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), pp. 227-242.

⁹⁸ Elias Ashmole (1617-1692): His Autobiographical and Historical Notes, his Correspondence, and Other Contemporary Sources Relating to His Life and Work, edited by C. H. Josten, 4 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1966), 2:468, January 23, 1648.

⁹⁹ Scot, The Discoverie of Witchcraft, p. 239.

¹⁰⁰ George Lyman Kittredge, Witchcraft in Old and New England (New York: Russell and Russell, 1929), p. 142.

characterized by a short life span, disease and primitive living conditions.¹⁰¹

Many aristocratic gamesters, however, were skeptical of astrology. A diviner had to be sure his correct predictions outweighed the incorrect ones, Lilly recorded:

. . . Alexander Hart, . . . his greatest Skill was to elect young Gentlemen fit Times to play at Dice, that they might win or get Money.¹⁰²

Hart was convicted of being a cheat, and he fled to Holland to avoid his sentence.¹⁰³ Gamesters under the later Stuarts were less inclined to consult astrologers as Copernicus and Newton's theories manifested a clear distinction between terrestrial and celestial bodies.¹⁰⁴ Increased standards of living and political stability may also have accounted for a decline in the use of astrology as a guide for gaming.

In summation, the Stuart era was a period of political, religious, economic and social upheaval. Political changes

¹⁰¹Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp. 5-15.

¹⁰²The Last of the Astrologers: Mr. William Lilly's History of His Life and Times from the Year 1602 to 1681, ed. Katharine M. Briggs, (London: The Folklore Society, 1974), p. 25.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p. 349

occurred with the accession of the Stuarts and the implementation of their often inadequate policies. The failure of these policies to deal effectively with political and religious matters was manifested in the disruptive Civil Wars of the 1640's and the end of the Divine Right monarchy in 1688. Economic and social unrest was also exhibited in this same period in the form of inflation, over-population, and the acquisition of status by monetary rather than traditional means.

Throughout this century of rapid change the upper-class of Stuart England remained relatively stable. Their techniques to combat political and religious turmoil such as retaining control over the House of Lords accounted in part for their continuity. The success of the elite in bolstering a depressed economy and their own social status augmented with new capitalistic methods guaranteed in part the emergence of England as a colonial power.

An examination of the gaming habits of the elite in seventeenth-century England provides an insight into these changes as they reflect their lifestyle and cultural patterns. As noted, the evidence for the popularity of gaming is exhibited in the many compendiums like Cotton's The Compleat Gamester also provide proof that gaming was an acceptable leisure time pursuit for the aristocrats and gentry of Stuart England.

The critics of gaming, especially the Puritans, endeavored to enact laws and proclamations which restricted the gaming of the elite. Unprofitability, association with evil rogues, swearing, excessive drinking and other Puritan objections to gamblers reflected the political and religious conflicts which occurred in the early seventeenth century. The Book of Sports, issued by James I and Charles I were designed to curb the Puritan zealots and to protect the traditional rights of the Stuart upper class.

The gaming techniques of the aristocracy and gentry differed from those of the lower classes because the elite had not only the legal and customary rights to gaming, but also greater leisure time, more capital to purchase game implements, to engage in gambling or to consult an astrologer while gaming in seventeenth-century England. The upper-class methods of gaming changed more quickly than the lower class as the educated elements of society adopted the latest scientific theories, such as those that encompassed probability or the relation of the earth to the heavens in astronomy and astrology.

In social and economic terms, the upper-class expansion of gaming throughout the Stuart era accounted in part for the maintenance of the gap between the two classes in Stuart England. The two classes only interacted on an equal basis while recreating during Church-

Ales and the Twelfth Night Revels. This traditional custom was observed partly as an aid to relieving social tensions. By the end of the Stuart era the desire for status, an increased willingness to take risks, and psychological forces of fatalism or luck combined with a more secure and adequate supply of capital to insure an increase in the amount of time the elite recreated and the emergence of professional gamblers, new gaming locales, and new games such as lotteries. These topics will be explored in greater detail in the upcoming chapters.

"When we do not hunt, we hawke, the
rest of the time is spent in tennis,
cheese, and dice, and in a worde we
eat and drinke and rise up to play:
and this is to live like a gentleman
but his pleasure!"
- Viscount Conway*

CHAPTER III

STUART GAMESTERS

In Stuart England, essential prerequisites for membership in the elite were financial independence, birth or education, and the capacity to live idly without soiling one's hands with manual or professional tasks. An aristocrat or member of the gentry in Stuart England, had a moral obligation to live in a style commensurate with his dignity. A prime test of status and competitiveness was liberality reflected in rich clothes, a lavish table, a well-furnished house and expensive gaming activities. To the landed classes recreating was a suitable pastime for a nobleman. The popularity of self-improvement manuals like Henry Peacham's The Compleat Gentleman illustrate

*Bridenbaugh, Vexed and Troubled Englishmen: 1590-1642, p. 112.

how important it was for a courtier to know how to play cards or handle the dice.¹

In the early seventeenth century the various forms of excessive expenditure which included gaming and subsequently gambling sprang from an attitude of mind which put generosity and display before the Calvinist ideals of frugality and thrift. In this era there was a confusion between the feudal ideal of generous hospitality and stately living in the country and the Renaissance ideal of sophisticated patronage and display at court or in town which accounted in part for the increased urbanization of Stuart England. Conspicuous consumption was also encouraged by the growing popularity of attendance upon an extravagant court.²

As the Stuart era progressed, the place for an aristocrat was at the court.³ The ideal gentleman was not dedicated to personal perfection but to public service and political action.⁴ At the courts of the Stuarts' this

¹Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641, pp. 42-50 and p. 547.

²Ibid., p. 42, p. 547 and p. 581.

³Notestein, The English People on the Eve of Colonization: 1603-1630, p. 39.

⁴Walter E. Houghton, Jr., The Formation of Thomas Fuller's Holy and Profane States (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1938), pp. 110-111.

political action was intertwined with leisure pursuits to develop a courtly tradition of aristocratic gaming.⁵ The gamester followed the example of his king or queen in selecting his games and recreations. For this reason one cannot divorce the courtier from the court. The Stuart court was the dictator of social and cultural trends, and the games and gaming methods which were popular at the top of the social scale often filtered down to the lower classes.⁶

The court in Stuart England performed four functions. The first function was to minister to the needs, comforts and recreations of the royal family and their friends. In fulfilling this goal the members of the nobility and gentry were expected to know and participate in the games and amusements popular with royalty. A second function of the court was to display the wealth and greatness of the kingdom. One way to impress another country was with a relaxed court and intensive play where large sums of

⁵Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, pp. 68-73.

⁶William B. Boulton, The Amusements of Old London: Being A Survey of the Sports and Pastimes, Tea Gardens and Parks, Playhouses and Other Diversions of the People of London from the Seventeenth to the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century, 2 vols. (1901; reprint ed., New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969), pp. 130-131.

money exchanged hands nightly.⁷ It was at the court that the increased scale of gaming and consequently gambling was significant. At times the office of the Groom Porter's, which controlled gaming at the courts of the Stuarts, served as a gambling saloon for the courtiers who needed some distraction with which to while away extensive periods of inactivity.⁸

Thirdly, the court also supplied posts of prestige and reward to loyal subjects. The monarch used his power to grant patents and licenses to reward trustworthy subjects. The position of Groom Porter was also a lucrative post. Finally, the court supplied the machinery for the central government and foreign policy of the nation. In this function, it was often advantageous for the crown to encourage certain indoor games, for example, card-playing if the crown generated revenue from the sale of packs of cards.⁹

The English court of the seventeenth century was a very public place, and people crowded into the palaces to witness the monarch and the royal family engage in their

⁷G. P. V. Akrigg, Jacobean Pageant or the Court of James I (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1962; reprint ed., New York: Atheneum, 1978), p. 24.

⁸Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641, p. 569.

⁹Akrigg, Jacobean Pageant or the Court of James I, p. 24.

daily activities.¹⁰ Courtiers had access to the Presence Chamber, Privy Gardens and gaming locales of the court, i.e., the tennis courts, bowlings alleys, Groom Porter's and so forth; so that they could follow the example of their social superiors.¹¹

Royal and Noted Gamesters

At the Elizabethan court every game had to be played as befitted a Queen. There were perfumed backgammon pieces ornamented with crests and the board was inlaid with ivory and set with jewels. The courtiers were obliged to kneel even when playing cards because the Queen expected it.¹² With the accession of James I the gaming at court changed dramatically.

In contrast to Elizabeth's court, the Jacobean court was marked by extravagance, disorder, drunkenness and

¹⁰Coate, Social Life in Stuart England, pp. 75-76

¹¹Maurice Ashley, Life in Stuart England (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1964), p. 92 and Ashton, Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne: Taken from Original Sources, p. 85.

¹²Beatrice Saunders, The Age of Candlelight: The English Social Scene in the Seventeenth Century (Philadelphia: Dufour Editions, 1961), p. 27.

"... great golden play."¹³ James I's court lacked a sense of decorum. Yet James I was also a quick-witted and intelligent monarch who warned his son Prince Henry: "Beware of making your sporters your councillors."¹⁴ Noted Jacobean gamblers included William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke and Sir George Wharton.¹⁵

At Whitehall, James I established an elaborate procedure known as the "Order of All Night" to end the daily gaming. When the monarch went to bed the doors of the Privy Chamber were locked, and this was the signal for the courtiers to rake in their winnings and retire.¹⁶ This procedure continued throughout the reigns of the Stuarts.

The court of Charles I varied considerably from his father's. Charles I tried to establish a moral court;

¹³Davies, *The Early Stuarts: 1603-1660*, p. 263 and *The Chamberlain Letters: A Selection of the Letters of John Chamberlain Concerning Life in England from 1597 to 1626*, ed., Elizabeth McClure Thomson, with a Preface by A. L. Rowse (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), p. 33.

¹⁴Maurice Ashley, *The Stuarts in Love; with some Reflections on Love and Marriage in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1964, p. 104 and Norman Wymer, *Sport in England: A History of Two Thousand Years of Games and Pastimes* (London: George C. Harrap & Co., Ltd., 1949), p. 81.

¹⁵John Heneage Jesse, *Memoirs of the Court of England During the Stuarts, Including the Protectorate*, 6 vols. (Boston: Chester F. Rice Co., n.d.), 2:25-26.

¹⁶Akrigg, *Jacobean Pageant or the Court of King James I*, p. 158.

drunkenness was outlawed, and the extravagances of the Jacobean court were curbed.¹⁷ Charles and his Queen, Henrietta Maria, set a pattern of good behavior and unimpeachable morality which procured for Charles the nickname, "The White King."¹⁸

Although the Caroline court was more moral it was not without its gamblers. In fact, Charles himself suggested the plot of Shirley's play The Gamester which was performed in 1634.¹⁹ Gaming was still a key to status, and John Earle defined an idle gallant of the reign as one who:

.... observes London trulier than the termers, and his business is the street, the stage, the court, and those places where a proper man is best shown. If he be qualified in gaming extraordinary, he is so much the more genteel and compleat,²⁰ and he learns the best oaths for the purpose.

¹⁷Patrick Morrah, Restoration England (London: Constable & Co. Ltd., 1979), p. 38 and Roger Lockyer, Tudor and Stuart Britain: 1471-1714 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), p. 244.

¹⁸Jesse, Memoirs of the Court of England During The Reign of the Stuarts, Including the Protectorate, 2:181.

¹⁹Samuel R. Gardiner, History of England from the Accession of James I to the Outbreak of the Civil War: 1603-1642, 10 vols. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1905), 7:331-333.

²⁰John Earle, Microcosmographie or A Piece of the World Discovered in Essays and Characters (1628; reprint ed., London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1899), p. 30.

One of the most notorious gamesters of this period was the poet Sir John Suckling. John Aubrey wrote:

He was the greatest gallant of his time, and the greatest Gamester, both for Bowling and Cards, so that no Shopkeeper would trust him for 6d., as today, for instance, he might by winning, be worth half so much, or perhaps sometimes be minus nihilo.²¹

Aubrey also described another interesting gamester of the time. Sir John Denham was both a poet and architect. When he was young he was rooked by gamesters, and his father reproved him severely for it. To appease his father John wrote a little essay titled Against Gameing, and to Shew the Vanties and Inconveniences of It. Shortly after his father's death, however, Denham resumed his gaming and lost the estate his father had left him in a wager.²²

Naturally the vast majority of Stuart gamesters were more moderate in their gaming. In the mid-seventeenth century, for example, one can note that the Earl of Bedford only took moderate sums with him for the playing of dice or cards at a friend's estate.²³

²¹Aubrey, Brief Lives, p. 287.

²²Ibid., p. 91.

²³Gladys Scott Thomson, Life in a Noble Household: 1641-1700, (London: Jonathon Cape, 1937), p. 61.

During the Commonwealth, the court of Oliver Cromwell has a somber and moral tone. Much of the ceremony of the former courts was revived, but the institutions of gaming such as the Groom Porter's were absent.²⁴ John Reresby penned this description of the court in 1658.

There was little satisfaction in that town in those days. There was no court made to Oliver but by his own party,....There were no comedies or other diversions (which were forbidden not only as ungodly, but for fear of drawing company or numbers together),....so that the nobility and gentry lived most in the country.²⁵

In his youth Cromwell himself was a gamester; but he repented afterwards.²⁶

Despite the Puritan restrictions many gamesters continued to enjoy sports and games during the Protectorate. Tennis courts in London were kept open for gamesters.²⁷ There is also some evidence that what aristocrats did on

²⁴ Davies, The Early Stuarts: 1603-1660, pp. 264-266 and Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, p. xviii.

²⁵ Memoirs of Sir John Reresby: The Complete Text and a Selection of His Letters, ed. Andrew Browning (Glasgow: Jackson, Son & Co., 1936), p. 22.

²⁶ Maurice Ashley, ed., Cromwell (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1969), pp. 82-83.

²⁷ Antonia Fraser, Cromwell: The Lord Protector (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), pp. 475-476.

their own private estates for their own amusement was not really interrupted by the Puritan regime.²⁸ By the end of the Commonwealth, a more relaxed atmosphere had developed, and Sir Francis Throckmorton was able to journey to London where he watched dancing horses and played cards without molestation.²⁹

The Restoration marked the return of gamblers and subsequent expansion of their numbers. The Restoration court was noted for its vices, drunkenness and intensity of play. Charles II and the younger of Cavalier heirs who had been reared in exile on the Continent returned to England determined to enjoy all of the pleasures life offered.³⁰ Gramont described the court of Charles II as:

....an entire scene of gallantry and amusements, with all the politeness and magnificence which the inclinations of a prince naturally addicted to tenderness and pleasure, could suggest....³¹

²⁸ Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, pp. 137-139.

²⁹ Fraser, Cromwell: The Lord Protector, p. 476.

³⁰ Saunders, The Age of Candlelight: The English Social Scene in the Seventeenth Century, p. 32 and George Macauley Trevelyan, England Under the Stuarts, 21st ed. (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1949) p. 291.

³¹ Anthony Hamilton, Memoirs of Count Grammont, ed. Sir Walter Scott, (Philadelphia: David McKay, Publisher, 1894), p. 204.

Perhaps the gamesters of the Restoration were haunted by the political insecurities of the times. A courtier had no guarantee that civil wars would not return and strip him of his wealth and status.

Although Charles II was a generous gamester, he never permitted the revels of the night before to affect the business of the following day.³² Charles was probably aware that some people play games only for social recognition.³³ They may be uninterested in the outcome of the game; the relaxed atmosphere which often establishes informal conversation is what they desired.³⁴ He recognized that there may, in short, be a "game" outside of the one being played. In this manner Charles shrewdly put a stop to expectations that he might have held out in the hilarity of the moment.³⁵ Charles, himself, was not a particularly

³²Jesse, Memoirs of the Court of England During the Reign of the Stuarts, Including the Protectorate, 4:272-273 and Morrah, Restoration England, p. 21.

³³Bernard Suits, The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), p. 34.

³⁴Martin Shubik, The Uses and Methods of Gaming (Elsevier, New York: 1975), p. 23 and p. 34.

³⁵Richard Ollard, The Image of the King: Charles I and Charles II (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1979), p. 54 and Jesse, Memoirs of the Court of England During the Reign of the Stuarts, Including the Protectorate, 4:272-273.

keen gamester. He enjoyed tennis more than cards and dice.³⁶

The renowned male gamesters of the Restoration included both nobility and the writers and poets known collectively as "The Wits." John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester; Henry Jermyn, Earl of St. Albans; and George Villiers, Second Duke of Buckingham, were among the more notable. Evelyn wrote of the Earl of St. Albans:

It is incredible how easy a life this gent: has lived, and in what plenty even abroad, whilst his Majestie Charles II was a sufferer, nor lesse, the immense summs he has lost at play, which yet at about 80 yeares old he continues, having one that sets by him to name the spot in the Cards.... He is with all this a prudent old Courtier, and much inrich'd since his Majesties returne.³⁷

Although most Stuart gamesters did not gamble away all their possessions they did sometimes play for large sums and a few were ruined. Among these was the second Duke of Buckingham who gambled away so much of his estate that by 1671 he was in debt L140,000.³⁸ Buckingham

³⁶Burton, The Jacobeans at Home, p. 298.

³⁷The Diary of John Evelyn, ed. E. S. de Beer, 6 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1955), 4:337-338.

³⁸Jesse, Memoirs of the Court of England During the Reign of the Stuarts, Including the Protectorate, 5:95.

was labeled by Bishop Burnet as "contemptible and poor."³⁹

In 1685, Charles II died and his brother, James, ascended to the throne. Evelyn described James II's court as: "...exceedingly changed into a more solemn and moral behaviour. James II affecting neither Prophanesse, nor buffonry."⁴⁰ He believed that the court had a real responsibility to shape public morality by providing a righteous example, and thus he encouraged his courtiers to avoid the extravagances of gaming.⁴¹

The Glorious Revolution in 1688, and the accession of William III and Mary II to the throne of England marked another change for gamblers. In social terms the court remained the arbiter of fashion and taste, but the court declined as a center for gaming.⁴² The development and expansion of clubs, coffeehouses and spas coupled with the moralistic tone of the court dictated that gamblers who

³⁹David C. Douglas, gen. ed., English Historical Documents, 13 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), vol. 8: 1660-1714, ed. Andrew Browning, p. 899.

⁴⁰Evelyn, Diary, 4:415, February 14, 1685.

⁴¹John Miller, James II: A Study in Kingship (Sussex: Wayland Publishers, 1977), p. 122 and Coate, Social Life in Stuart England, p. 78.

⁴²George Clark, The Later Stuarts 1660-1714 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1955), pp. 411-412 and Mary Ede, Arts and Society in England Under William and Mary (London: Stainer & Bell, 1979), p. 19.

were not intimates of the King or Queen were forced to game at other locales.⁴³

William III rarely appeared in public although in private among his associates he was a keen gamester.⁴⁴ On one occasion William lost £2500 to the noted gamester Richard Bouchier.⁴⁵ Queen Mary supported William's efforts to curb the gamesters at court, although she was an ardent gamester herself.⁴⁶

The reign of Queen Anne ushered in an increase in the number of gamesters. Although a strongly moral person, the Queen was addicted to gambling and card-playing. Anne frequently lost when she played these games.⁴⁷ She enjoyed her private card-playing parties, and she rarely made

⁴³Elizabeth Hamilton, William's Mary: A Biography of Mary II (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972), p. 273.

⁴⁴Maurice Ashley, The Glorious Revolution of 1688 (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1966), p. 13.

⁴⁵Theophilus Lucas, Lives of the Gamesters, in Games and Gamesters of the Restoration: "The Compleat Gamester," by Charles Cotton, (1674) and Lives of the Gamesters," by Theophilus Lucas, (1714), ed. J. Issacs, with an Introduction by Cyril Hughes Hartmann (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1930; reprint ed.) p. 202.

⁴⁶Traill and Mann, Social England, 4:807.

⁴⁷David Green, Queen Anne (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 26 and The Letters and Diplomatic Instructions of Queen Anne, ed. Beatrice Curtis Brown (London: Cassell & Co. Ltd., 1935), p. 28.

made public appearances at the gaming locales like Bath and Tunbridge Wells which were developing away from the court.⁴⁸

Throughout the century, Stuart gamesters were the objects of satire and criticism. John Northbrooke wrote:

What is a man now a dayes if he know not fashions, and how to weare his apparel after the best fashions to keep company, & to become Mummings, & Diceplayers, & to play their twentie, forty or 100.li. at Cards, Dice &c, Post, Cente, Gleke, or such other games: if he cannot thus do, he is called a myser, a wretch, a lobbe, a clowne, and one that knoweth no fellowship nor fashions, and lesse honestie.⁴⁹

"False as dicer's oaths", was also a common literary expression at this time.

Gamesters had been the targets of Puritan preachers and writers throughout the reigns of James I and Charles I. Puritan John Dod penned a passage expressing the Puritan view of gaming:

... if we should come in to a house, and see many Physic-boxes and Glasses, we would conclude somebody is sick; so when we see Hounds, and Hawks, and Cards, and Dice, we may fear⁵⁰ that there is some sick soul in that Family.

Thomas Fuller in The Holy State and the Prophane State, defined gaming as "... an enticing witch," which the

⁴⁸Ashley, Life in Stuart England, p. 101 and George Macaulay Trevelyan, England Under Queen Anne: Blenheim (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1930), p. 167.

⁴⁹Northbrooke, A Treatise, p. 2.

⁵⁰Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, p. 131.

gambler intensely studied.⁵¹ Gamesters who spent all of their time eating, drinking, sleeping and sporting were guilty of disobedience and rebellion against God.⁵² The Puritan tract, The Ten Commandments, stated:

Every man of every degree, as well rich as poor, as well mighty as mean, as well noble as base, must know that he is born for some employment to the good of his brethren.⁵³

This censure of gamesters was effective during the Civil Wars and the Protectorate, and many aristocratic gamesters curbed their public gaming activities.

The Restoration marked the return of the gamesters who had fled to the Continent during the Commonwealth. Restoration gamesters, like their ancestors, were also ridiculed, satirized and described in the literature of the period. Tom Brown wrote in Amusements Serious and Comical:

One idle day I ventured into one of these Gaming-houses, where I found an oglio of rakes of several humours and conditions met together. Some had never a penny left them to bless their heads with. One that had played away even his shirt and cravat, and all his clothes but his breeches, stood shiver-

⁵¹Thomas Fuller's The Holy State and the Profane State, ed. Maximilian Graff Walten, 2 vols. (1642; reprint ed., New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), 2:414.

⁵²Hill, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England, p. 140.

⁵³Ibid.

ing in a corner of the room, and another was comforting him...⁵⁴

As noted, gamesters of the Augustan age were distinguished by their love of gambling. Almost every sport and pastime of the age depended upon wagers for added excitement. The writers of the period satirized the gamesters' obsession with gambling. The epilogue to Mrs. Centlivre's play The Gamester (1705) provided an example. It read in

... Suppose then, Fortune, only rules the Dice,
And on the Square you Play; yet, who that's Wise
Woul'd to the Credit of a Faithless Main Trust
his good Dad's hard-gotten hoarded Gain? But,
then, such Vultures round a Table wait, And,
hovering, watch the Bubble's sickly State;
The young fond Gambler, covetous of more,
Like Esop's Dog, loses his certain Store.⁵⁵

Professional Gamesters

Gaming activities in Stuart England acquired a new dimension with the development of the professional gamester in the mid-seventeenth century. Professionalism in gaming occurred under the guise of gambling. The professional gamesters in seventeenth-century England were those

⁵⁴ Tom Brown, Amusements Serious and Comical and Other Works, ed. Arthur L. Hayward (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1927), p. 55.

⁵⁵ The Dramatic Works of the Celebrated Mrs. Centlivre, with A New Account of Her Life, 3 vols. (London: John Pearson, 1872; reprint ed., New York: AMS Press, 1968), 1:195-196.

whose skills and chance allowed them to make fast and explicit calculations of the odds of each move.⁵⁶ Each bet was designed to give him the maximum monetary wealth.⁵⁷ Professional gamesters may also be defined as those who devoted a substantial amount of time to gaming in an attempt to supplement or secure their income.

The professional gamesters in Stuart England included the aristocratic rake like James, Duke of Monmouth, a natural son of Charles II, and the subjects of mean birth like Miles Corbet and Joe Haynes, professional roques described by Theophilus Lucas in his book Lives of the Gamesters (1714).

The development of the professional gamester in Stuart England reflects a number of factors about society in this period. Under the later Stuarts, the changed attitudes towards the ethics of money-making helped to create the professional gamester. The increasing acceptability of gambling as a part of gaming was due in part to the rise of capitalism. The large-scale borrowing that was essential to the new methods of production and trade

⁵⁶Shubik, The Uses and Methods of Gaming, pp. 41-44.

⁵⁷Shubik, Game Theory and Related Approaches to Social Behavior, p. 107.

in the seventeenth century dictated the legitimacy of using capital to accrue a profit.⁵⁸ The Jacobean attitude that borrowing was a desperate and dangerous expedient was ignored by the time of the Restoration.⁵⁹ Investing money in gaming activities was often viewed as a legitimate way to assure a return if one were a competent gamester.⁶⁰

Professionalism in gaming also developed because many upper-class gamblers had difficulty finding suitable employment after the collapse of the tradition of service in war.⁶¹ Occupations were particularly hard to come by if one were a younger son. Court patronage in the form of offices could not keep pace with the rising numbers of educated aristocrats and gentry who sought to fill these positions. Potential office-holders could indulge in gaming activities while they waited for a change in fortune.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, p. 215 and p. 120.

⁵⁹ Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641, pp. 538-539.

⁶⁰ Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, p. 215 and p. 120.

⁶¹ Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641, p. 583.

⁶² Lawrence Stone, Social Change and Revolution in England: 1540-1640, pp. 23-24.

The existence of a wide-spread social convention which idealized the opulent way of life made it easy for an aristocrat to draw on family capital to finance personal pleasure.⁶³

An attitude of rising expectations, both economic and social, occurred in Stuart England with the Civil Wars in the 1640's and the Glorious Revolution in 1688, which questioned the rightness of the status quo and the duties of submission and obedience.⁶⁴ Many in Stuart England no longer believed that Fate was irrational, incomprehensible and uncontrollable.⁶⁵ The popularity of gaming manuals which calculated the mathematical odds for dicing and card-playing illustrates this point. Not only could a professional gamester increase his wealth with calculated risks both in business and at the gaming table, but he could also be assured that his successful endeavors would enhance his social status as well.

Many professional gamesters of base birth were willing to secure both a livelihood and status by spending, entertaining and gaming lavishly with members of the landed classes. The new wealth of the professional Stuart game-

⁶³Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641, p. 583.

⁶⁴Laslett, The World We Have Lost: England Before the Industrial Age, 1. 185.

⁶⁵Mervyn James, Past and Present Supplement Three: English Politics and the Concept of Honour: 1845-1642 (Oxford: The Past and Present Society 1978), p. 7.

ster was advertised with the purchase of expensive capital goods like landed estates or opulent fashions. Conspicuous consumption served as a symbolic justification for the maintenance or acquisition of status in the more fluid society of the late seventeenth century.⁶⁶

Jonathan Laud was a late Stuart gamester who used unscrupulous gaming techniques to secure for himself a life of comfort. Laud used a false dicing-box at the game of Inn and Inn to win 350 pounds a year, a coach and six horses. He retained the estate and abandoned his life as a rogue to live upon his good fortune.⁶⁷

Laud's acceptance into the elite is indicative of the great social mobility which occurred in late Stuart society. There also occurred in the late seventeenth century a humanizing of family relationships and the growth of respect for the individual. This respect was manifested in the realistic portraiture of the century, in the rise of the autobiography and in the acceptance of the new rich into the elite of society even if the money used to attain this status was secured in an unscrupulous manner.⁶⁸ The

⁶⁶ Lawrence Stone, Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641, p. 50 and p. 185.

⁶⁷ Lucas, The Lives of the Gamesters, p. 137.

⁶⁸ Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641, p. 36 and p. 584.

successful endeavors of professional gamblers like Jonathan Laud and St. Evremont served to reinforce this theory on the recognition of value of the individual separate from his family.

St. Evremont was a French nobleman who was both a soldier and a gambler. He excelled at most games in which dice were used. After cheating the King of France at a game of Grand Tricktrack, St. Evremont fled to Holland to avoid prosecution. When Charles II ascended to the throne of England, he invited St. Evremont to England where he also enjoyed the patronage of James II and William III.⁶⁹

The gamblers who succeeded in living off their earnings from the gaming-tables were outnumbered by those gamblers who failed to make enough money at their gaming. Many of these unsuccessful gamblers earned for themselves the label of a rogue as they employed cheating techniques and schemes to cozen innocent people. The Compleat Gambler warned readers to beware of these rakes who could not be separated from genteel gamblers, "... being much of the same colour and feather, and by the eye undistinguishable."⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Lucas, The Lives of the Gamblers, pp. 224-228.

⁷⁰ Cotton, The Compleat Gambler, p. 3.

Some of these rooks used elaborate methods to cheat their victims. The rogue could wear a square topaz or flat diamond ring on his little finger which reflected every card he drew.⁷¹ Other methods of cheating included having a friend, or the box-keeper, as a confederate. Rooks also cheated by using marked cards, false dice or sleight-of-hand tricks. In describing the techniques of these unscrupulous gamesters Charles Cotton wrote:

These rooks are in continual motion, walking from one table to another, till they can discover some unexperienc'd young gentleman.... these they call Lambs, or Colls. Then do the Rooks (more properly called Wolves) strive who shall fasten on him first, following him close, and engaging him in some advantageous bets, and a length worries him, that it, gets all his money, and then the rooks (rogues I should have said) laugh and grin, saying the lamb is bitten.⁷²

Professional gamesters also took advantage of the fact that it was the mark of a gentleman to be able to engage in gaming without cheating and to display good sportsmanship when he lost. Losses at gaming were called debts of honor, and they were to be paid the next morn-

⁷¹G. W. Thornbury, Shakespeare's England: or Sketches of our Social History in the Reign of Elizabeth, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1856; reprint ed., New York: AMS Press, 1974), 1:315.

⁷²Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 4. In Stuart England many of the aliases of the gamblers were drawn from the phraseology of the falconer and the sport of hawking. Huffs, Setters, Guts, Pads, Biters, Droppers and Filers were all slang terms for rooks. See Thornbury, Shakespeare's England, 1:139-140 and 315-316.

ing.⁷³ Stuart gamesters, especially professional gamesters and rogues used a number of methods to pay off or avoid gaming debts. Borrowing money from a family member or friend was one route a gamester could take. The gamester and poet, William Wycherly, created a poem to commemorate one of these occasions. It was titled, "To A Fine Young Woman, Who Lent Him Money after a Loss at Play; Telling Him, His Luck was Not so Bad as He Thought It," and it read in part:

My late Great Loss at Cards, (I must confess)
 Make my Bad Fortune more my Good Success,
 I'll Luck, which gain'd your Good Will, Happiness;
 If Fortune, cruel to me, had not been,
 My Lucy's Kindness I had never seen;
 Who, to th' Unhappy, proves a Friend alone,⁷⁴
 So my Bad Luck is my Good Fortune grown....⁷⁴

An enterprising gamester could also pay off his debts by marrying an heiress. Randal Macdonnel, Earl of Antrim, had accomplished this in 1635 by marrying the widow of the Duke of Buckingham.⁷⁵ Sir George Etherege followed his example.⁷⁶

⁷³ Ashton, Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne, p. 85 and Anthony Hamilton, Memoirs of Count Grammont, p. 247.

⁷⁴ The Complete Works of William Wycherley, ed. Montague Summers, 4 vols. (London: The Nonesuch Press, 1924), 4:200.

⁷⁵ Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England Begun in the Year 1641, ed. W. Dunn Macray, 6 vols. (1888; reprint ed., Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1958), 1:318.

⁷⁶ Jesse, Memoirs of the Court of England During the Reign of the Stuarts, Including the Protectorate, 6:66.

If a gamester wanted to avoid paying his debts he had a number of options in Stuart England. If the debts were owed to a social inferior a nobleman could use his privileges as a Peer to escape the debt.⁷⁷ An aristocrat could also appeal to the Monarch for a waiver of debts due to the king.⁷⁸ A few Stuart gamesters were willing to take their chances in the courts. The existence of both the lay and ecclesiastical courts allowed numerous instances of counter-pleading which often worked in the favor of the gamester.⁷⁹ If the professional gamester were a nobleman, he knew that both the government and the public witnessed a clear distinction between punishments suitable for gentlemen and those reserved for the less refined.⁸⁰

In 1667, a bill for prisoners lying in debt caused a great debate in the Parliament. The bill proposed that

⁷⁷Great Britain, Public Records Office, The Manuscripts of the House of Lords, vol. 2 (1695-1697): See Petition #1092, p. 375.

⁷⁸Great Britain, Public Records Office, Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, of the Reign of Charles II, vol. 2 (1661-1662), There are numerous petitions for release from debts; see p. 220 and p. 572 for two examples.

⁷⁹Hill, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England, p. 330.

⁸⁰Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641, p. 29.

debtors be freed if they swore an oath that they were not worth £5 above their clothes, working tools and utensils.

Sir John Maynard stated:

... there was great deceit in this work 'utensils' and that it was a word of large extent, as thus: a professed gamester that hath an hundred pieces of money in his pocket will swear that he is not worth £5 besides his utensils and necessary working tools, for he accounts his hundred pieces the utensils and necessary tools of his gaming.⁸¹

Stuart gamesters could also engage in duels to settle their debts. Duels were forbidden by Proclamation in 1660, but many gamesters ignored the law and fought anyway.⁸² Dueling as a way to settle debts even increased in popularity under the later Stuarts. In 1702, Sir Edward Payne, who had lost 560 guineas at Hazard to the rogue Beau Hewit, killed Hewit in a duel in Hyde Park the next morning.⁸³

The increase in dueling over accusations of cheating or gaming debts reflected the strict honor code of Stuart society. A gentleman of quality was obligated to challenge an opponent for the most trivial of verbal slips.

⁸¹The Diary of John Milward, Esquire, Member of Parliament for Derbyshire, September 1666 to May 1668, ed. Caroline Robbins (Cambridge: The University Press, 1938), p. 87.

⁸²Great Britain, Public Record Office, Calendar of State Papers Domestic, of the Reign of Charles II, vol. 1 (1660-1661): 13 August 1660, p. 189.

⁸³Lucas, Lives of the Gamesters, pp. 268-269.

A refusal to meet a challenge resulted in public humiliation.⁸⁴ As a rule, defeat in a duel did not necessarily imply guilt or moral opprobrium; rather, it was the spirit or steadfastness with which the events were encountered not the final outcome that mattered more in maintaining a gentleman's honor.⁸⁵

Finally, there were other illegal methods of avoiding or paying off debts. The first technique involved fleeing to the Continent to avoid one's creditors. The second course open to a rogue was to recover a loss at the gaming-tables by engaging in highway robbery or stealing.⁸⁶ This course of action could be dangerous if one were caught. The professional gamester Major Clancy was hanged at Tyburn for stealing in 1666.⁸⁷

Female Gamesters

The female gamesters of the seventeenth century reflected the gaming and gambling tendencies of their society. The Jacobean Anne Clifford chronicled her losses at cards in her diary, and her contemporary Winifred

⁸⁴Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641, p. 246.

⁸⁵James, English Politics and the Concept of Honour: 1485-1642, p. 54.

⁸⁶Morrah, Restoration England, p. 148.

⁸⁷Lucas, The Lives of the Gamesters, p. 137

Brounker was famous for her attachment to the gaming-table.⁸⁸ The female gamesters of the early seventeenth century, however, did not play on the same scale as their descendants in the Restoration. Whereas Clifford recorded her loss at Gleek as £15 for a night, Lady Castlemaine (one of Charles II's mistresses) was reputed to have lost £25,000 in one night of play.⁸⁹

The Duchess of Mazarin (another of Charles' mistresses) was the only female gamester to be included in Theophilus Lucas's book, The Lives of the Gamesters (1714).

Lucas wrote:

. . . for gaming, her lodgings were more frequented than the Groom-Porters, . . . she was as great a proficient as any at that time; witness her winning at Basset of Nell Gwin 1400 guineas in one night, and of the Duchess of Portsmouth above . . .

⁸⁸Carroll Camden, The Elizabethan Woman (London: The Elsevier Press, 1952), p. 160 and Jesse, Memoirs of the Court of England During the Reign of the Stuarts, Including the Protectorate, 6:107-110.

⁸⁹Camden, The Elizabethan Woman, p. 160 and Pepys, Diary, 9:71. It is conceivable that the female gamesters of the Stuart era were more inclined to spend large sums at the gaming table because they knew that someone else (a husband or lover) would pay their gaming and gambling debts. The increase in the gaming losses of female gamesters may also have been a result of the increasing prosperity of the era. Female gamesters under the later Stuarts had more money to spend on trivial matters like gaming. This money could have come from an increase in the amount they were allotted by their husbands or lovers, or the money could have come from their own resources as more women adopted businesslike practices to control their own estates.

80001....The Monarch himself contributed also to her advantage, being often taken in by her when he play'd.⁹⁰

Charles II always paid off the debts of his mistresses and female relatives.⁹¹ In fulfilling this obligation, Charles was exercising his role as patriarch with the responsibility to protect the good name of those under his care, and maintain his family's honor.⁹²

Under the later Stuarts the female gamesters engaged in playing cards, dicing and gambling games. Perhaps these more sedentary games were regarded as more suitable for women. It is conceivable that the women were also asserting their individuality as they staked wagers on the outcome of the games. It can also be argued, that female gamesters of the seventeenth century were using their only outlet to satisfy the instinct for aggression and competition.⁹³

⁹⁰ Lucas, Lives of the Gamesters, p. 250.

⁹¹ Jesse, Memoirs of the Court of England During the Reign of the Stuarts, Including the Protectorate, 4:277 and Memoirs of Sarah Duchess of Marlborough Together with her Characters of her Contemporaries and her Opinions, ed. William King (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1930), p. 58.

⁹² Jerrilyn Greene Marston, "Gentry Honor and Royalism in Early Stuart England," The Journal of British Studies vol. 8 (November 1973):27-29.

⁹³ Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641, p. 183.

Plate II.*

JOHN LOCKE

*Plumb, "The Commercialization of Childhood," p. 18.



Gaming ladies of the reigns of the later Stuarts were the objects of ridicule. In plays like The Provok'd Husband, Or, A Journey to London, the female gamester was depicted as neglecting her husband and "...solacing in one continual Round of Cards and good Company."⁹⁴ Thomas Brown also deplored the madness of gaming which made women "... abandon themselves thus to a passion that discomposes their minds, their health, their beauty...."⁹⁵ Nevertheless, some Augustan ladies were proud of their gaming abilities. Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough described herself as "having never read, or employed my time in anything but playing at cards, and having no ambition myself."⁹⁶

The frivolity and gambling habits of ladies of fashion were ascribed by John Locke to an upbringing which debarred them from more serious interests. Locke gave his opinion on female gamesters and gaming in Some Thoughts Concerning Education.

⁹⁴The Complete Works of Sir John Vanbrugh, eds. Bonamy Dobree and Geoffrey Webb, 4 vols. (London: The Nonesuch Press, 1927), 3:185.

⁹⁵Brown, Amusments Serious and Comical, p. 54.

⁹⁶Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, Memoirs, p. 15.

Play, wherein persons of condition, especially ladies, waste so much of their time, is a plain instance to me that men cannot be perfectly idle; they must be doing something; for how else could they sit so many hours toiling at that which generally gives more vexation than delight⁹⁷ to people whilst they are actually engaged in it?

The lack of other suitable pursuits for Augustan ladies can be explained in part by the fact that the masculine literary education for noble and gentlewomen, inherited from the Elizabethan era, was replaced by traditional feminine accomplishments and graces needed to catch a suitable husband.⁹⁸ This type of education included only the basic elements of reading and writing while the major emphasis was on proficiency in music, needlework, and courtly accomplishments like card-playing or gambling at Roly-Poly.⁹⁹ Perhaps, post-Restoration female gamesters were satisfying their deep-seated psychological needs to play and to work if only by performing some futile, costly and time-consuming ceremonial such as gaming.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ John Locke on Politics and Education, with an Introduction by Howard R. Penniman (New York: Walter J. Black, Inc., 1947), p. 381.

⁹⁸ Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, Children in English Society, 2 vols. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969) 1:31 and Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England: 1500-1800, p. 204.

⁹⁹ Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England: 1500-1800, p. 204.

¹⁰⁰ Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641, p. 183.

In conclusion, gaming was a suitable form of recreation for members of the elite in Stuart England. Gamesters took their cues in the matter of suitable recreations from the monarch and the court. As literary and political condemnation failed, the scale and intensity of gaming increased both at the court and at other locales such as spas or racetracks. The increase in gaming after the Restoration was augmented by the increase in the number of professional and female gamesters. Late Stuart gamesters were also the beneficiaries of a psychological restlessness which produced a live-for-today attitude. The rise of capitalism, a tight job market, the advancement of individualism, the decline of formal education for females and the idealization of a luxuriant lifestyle were all factors in increasing the number of gamesters in Stuart England.

"Gaming is become so much the fashion among the Beau Monde, that he who in Company should appear ignorant of the games in Vogue, would be reckoned low bred and hardly fit for conversation."

-Richard Seymour*

CHAPTER IV

GAMING LOCALES IN STUART ENGLAND

Gaming in Stuart England occurred in a wide variety of places. These places fluctuated in popularity throughout the century. Naturally, a great deal of gaming took place in private homes and country estates.¹ Hosts and hostesses who could provide both interesting guests and good gaming in their private homes were highly admired by aristocratic society. Marie D'Aulnoy paid the Duchess of Mazarine a compliment when she recorded in her Memoirs:

Her house was ever the rendezvous of all that then was illustrious and notable in London. I went there frequently. Everyone

* Richard Seymour in his preface to one of the 'Court Gamesters'. Hargrave, A History of Playing Cards and a Bibliography of Cards and Gaming, p. 205.

¹In January, 1660, Pepys recorded playing cards or other traditional games at his house or in the homes of friends twelve times. Pepys, Diary, 1:5-34.

recited stories, they played; they made good cheer, and the days passed like moments.²

Aside from private homes, many of the experienced male gamblers began their careers while attending the universities or the Inns of Court. The formal curriculum of the universities of Stuart England included the classics, drama, poetry, prose, architecture, theology, mathematics, physics, chemistry and history.³ The informal curriculum embraced "drinking, gaming and vaine Brutish pleasures."⁴ Indeed, some students viewed their experience at the universities as a glorious opportunity for drinking and gambling. Gramont admitted that he did poorly in college because "gaming was so much in my head."⁵

Amusements at college were regulated by the faculty. Frequent attendance at alehouses and taverns was forbidden, and students were told to shun cock-fights. These rules and regulations were constantly broken.⁶

In many cases a fellow of the university took charge

²Marie Catherine Baronne D'Aulnoy, Memoirs of the Court of England in 1675, trans. Mrs. William Henry Arthur, edited by George David Gilbert (New York: John Lane Co., 1913), p. 2.

³Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p.4.

⁴Coate, Social Life in Stuart England, pp. 62-63.

⁵Anthony Hamilton, Memoirs of Count Grammont, p. 18.

⁶Coate, Social Life in Stuart England, p. 64.

of the finances of the student. Ideally, he would pay the student's bills and dole out money in an attempt to control gaming expenditures.⁷ However, in 1628, John Earle revealed that this was not always the case.

He [the fellow] domineers over freshmen when they first come to the hatch and puzzles them with strange language of cues, and cees, and some broken Latin which he has learnt at his bin. His faculties extraordinary is the warming of a pair of cards, and telling out a dozen of counters for post and pair, and no man is more methodical in these businesses.⁸

Games in which students participated at universities included shove-groat, cards, dicing, tennis and bowling. Simonds D'Ewes' diary from 1621/22-24, when he studied at the Inns of Court, revealed that bowling was also a popular pastime among Puritan youths. Numerous passages in D'Ewes' Diary which read, "Monday brought foorth a little studye amidst a great deale of recreation," indicate how gaming often held precedence over studying.⁹

Some of the gentlemen at the universities marked their progress by gaging their mastery at gaming. Earle

⁷Notestein, The English People on the Eve of Colonization: 1603-1630, p. 139.

⁸John Earle, Microcosmographie, pp. 28-29.

⁹D'Ewes, Diary, p. 69. When speaking of pastimes, D'Ewes always used the word "vanities," implying that gaming was a sinful waste of time.

divulged how to distinguish an upperclassman.

The two marks of his seniority, is [sic] the bare velvet of his gown, and his proficiency at tennis, where when he can once play a set he is a freshman no more.¹⁰

Under the early Stuarts, many of the students from the universities or Temples (or Inns) would take a boat across the Thames to Southwark where unlicensed gaming was conducted outside of the control of the Puritan authorities.¹¹

The student's frequent gaming was not without protest. Sir Henry Blount regretted sending his sons to the Universities where they learned only debauchery.¹² Stuart society's criticism of the laxity of the scholars continued into the reign of Queen Anne when The Spectator lamented that the younger students at Cambridge were content to carry their speculations no further than the bowling greens and billard tables.¹³

Censure of the gaming at the college halls was particularly vocal during the twelve days of Christmas

¹⁰ John Earle, Microcosmographie, p. 39.

¹¹ Notestein, The English People on the Eve of Colonization: 1603-1630, p. 91 and Levi Fox, Shakespeare's England (London: Wayland Publishers, Ltd., 1972), p. 63.

¹² Aubrey, Brief Lives, p. 25.

¹³ Ashton, Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne: Taken from Original Sources, p. 14.

when unrestricted gaming was permitted. Both John Evelyn and Simonds D'Ewes were elected lieutenants of the Revells when they were students at the Middle Temple. The lieutenants were comptrollers who regulated the gaming and then set up boxes in the halls of the Inner and Middle Temples where dicers made contributions out of their winnings.¹⁴

Both young men resigned their positions. D'Ewes called it a "follye" and Evelyn labeled it a "riotous Costome and has relation to neither Virtue nor policy."¹⁵ However, it must be noted that both D'Ewes and Evelyn were regarded as Puritans, and that many students enjoyed the Revells during Twelfth Night.

After the young Stuart nobleman had graduated from the university and was in attendance at court, he quickly learned that the gaming skills he had acquired could be applied at the Groom Porter's. When the office of Groom Porter originated is unknown. Traditionally, in Tudor England, the Knight Marshall of the Household organized games of chance and acted as a bookkeeper at tournaments. By the end of the Tudor era the Groom Porter was a recognized officer of the Lord Steward's department of the

¹⁴ Ashton, The History of Gambling in England, p. 27. In 1764, when the floorboards of the Middle Temple Hall were taken up, nearly one hundred pairs of dice were found.

¹⁵ D'Ewes, Diary, p. 112 and Evelyn, Diary, 3:504.

Royal Household.¹⁶

The Groom Porter's duties encompassed furnishing the sovereign's lodgings with tables, chairs and stools; starting the fires and keeping clean rushes on the floor. His business also included providing cards, dice, and other implements of gaming. The Groom Porter or his deputies were expected to decide any disputes which arose at dicing, card-playing, bowling and so forth.¹⁷

Play at Court, like that at the universities, was encouraged from Christmas to Epiphany. Under the early Stuarts, this was the Groom Porter's legitimate time.¹⁸

John Chamberlain noted in 1603:

The world hath not been altogether so dull and dead this Christmas as was suspected, but rather the court hath flourished more than ordinary, whether it be that the new Comptroller Sir Edward Wotton hath put new life into it by his example (being always freshly attired and for the most part all in white, cap à pied), or that the humors

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Ashton, The History of Gambling in England, pp. 46-47 and Nelville Williams, Henry VII and His Court (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1971), p. 46.

17

Ashton, The History of Gambling in England, pp. 46-47.

18

Boulton, The Amusements of Old London: Being A Survey of the Sports and Pastimes, Tea Gardens and Parks, Playhouses and Other Diversions of the People of London from the Seventeenth to the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century, pp. 131-132.

of themselves grow more gallant: for besides much dancing, bear-baiting, and many plays, there hath been great golden play, wherein Master Secretary lost better than £800 in one night and as much more at other times, the greatest part whereof came to Edward Stanley's and Sir John Lee's share.¹⁹

The office of Groom Porter was suspended during the Protectorate, but after the Restoration, when gaming at court was again acceptable, the duties of the post were expanded.²⁰ The Groom Porter was now authorized to license thirty bowling greens, some tennis courts, cards, dice and the like.²¹ Under Charles II, gaming was so prodigal that the Groom Porter was ordered to clear the Palace precincts of tippling tents and gambling booths and to keep the court "a place of civility and honour."²²

The privileges of the Groom Porter soon extended beyond the current royal residence. The Calendar of State papers dated November 6, 1661, contains an interesting citation which acknowledges a grant to Sir Richard Hubbert of the office of Groom Porter in any of the King's Houses.²³

¹⁹ Chamberlain, Letters, p. 33.

²⁰ Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, p. xvii.

²¹ Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, of the Reign of Charles II, December 1662, 2:608.

²² Turner, The Court of St. James's, p. 152.

²³ Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, of the Reign of Charles II, 2:137.

By the reign of William and Mary the licensing of public gaming houses belonged by patent to the Groom Porter.²⁴

Letters patent issued by Queen Anne and printed in the London Gazette, December 6-10, 1705.

Whereas Her Majesty, by her Letters Patent to Thomas Archer, Esqre., constituting him Her Groom Porter, hath given full power to him and such Deputies as he shall appoint to supervise, regulate and authorize (by and under the Rules, Conditions, and Restrictions by the Law prescribed,) all manner of Gaming within this Kingdom. And, whereas, several of Her Majesty's Subjects, keeping Plays or Games in their Houses, have been lately abused, and had Moneys extorted from them by several ill disposed Persons, contrary to Law. These are, therefore, to give Notice, That no Person whatsoever, not producing his Authority from the said Groom Porter, under Seal of his Office, hath any Power to act anything under the said Patent. And, to the end that all such Persons offending as aforesaid, may be proceeded against according to Law, it is hereby desired, that Notice be given of all such Abuses to the said Groom Porter, or his Deputies, at his Office, at Mr. Stephenson's, a Scrivener's House, over against Old Man's Coffee House, near Whitehall.²⁵

The institution of the Groom Porter was criticized throughout the seventeenth century for its immoderations. Evelyn believed the office was unsuitable to a Christian court.²⁶ During Christmas 1668, Pepys was also shocked by

²⁴Traill and Mann, eds. Social England, 4:817.

²⁵Ashton, A History of Gambling in England, pp. 48-49.

²⁶Evelyn, Diary, 3:504.

the intensity of play he witnessed at the Groom Porter's.²⁷ Particularly loathsome was the violence that accompanied the amusements at the Groom Porter's. Bishop Morly, in 1662, outlined the extent of this turbulence when he said that the Groom Porter violated his duty to keep the gamesters in order and within bounds, by serving as a second for duels. The Bishop's unreceptive congregation at Whitehall merely laughed when he delivered his sermon.²⁸

The literature of Queen Anne's reign also satirized the Groom Porter's control of violence. Mrs. Centlivre's play The Busy Body provides a graphic illustration:

Sir George Airy. Oh, I honour Men of the Sword; and I presume this Gentleman is lately come from Spain or Portugal - by his Scars.

Marplot. No, really, Sir George, mine sprung from civil Fury: Happening last night into the Groom porter's - I had a strong inclination to go ten Guineas with a sort of a - sort of a - kind of a Milk Sop, as I thought: a Pox of the Dice, he flung out, and my Pockets being empty, as Charles knows they sometimes are, he prov'd a Surly North Briton, and broke my face for my deficiency.²⁹

In spite of the violence, the Groom Porter's popularity never waned.

²⁷Pepys, Diary, 9:2-4.

²⁸Ibid., 3:292-293, December 25, 1662.

²⁹Centlivre, Works, 2:66.

Aside from play at the Groom Porter's and in the Royal apartments, the courtiers could find ample opportunity for public gaming in the inns, alehouses, and taverns of both London and the countryside. As a rule, inns and alehouses were places that provided food and lodging to travelers in addition to ale and amusements. Taverns, on the other hand, were forbidden to harbor travelers.³⁰

The licensing of the alehouses was controlled by the local justices of the Crown. Two justices were required to approve a license. The licensee was supposed to be a respectable person, vouched for by the parson, the churchwardens and some of the prominent members of the parish.³¹ After James I's accession, the monopoly of the licensing of inns and alehouses was granted to his favorite the Duke of Buckingham.³²

Ideally, the licensed alehouses were supposed to close on Sundays, prohibit customers from drinking for more than an hour, forbid dicing and gambling and keep out undesirables; in reality few licensed alehouses adhered to

³⁰Joan Parkes, Travel in England in the Seventeenth Century (London: Oxford University Press, 1925; reprint ed., Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1970), p. 127.

³¹Notestein, The English People on the Eve of Colonization, p. 222.

³²Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, p. 106.

these regulations. Unlicensed alehouses flagrantly violated any attempt to control them.³³

The prevalence of many taverns and alehouses to cater to rogues was acknowledged early in the Stuart era; in 1616, a proclamation directed the justices of the peace to search with particular care in all inns and bowlings alleys for all those who had no lawful occupation.³⁴ Alehouses and taverns were the haunts of the professional gamblers.

The games popular in the alehouses included card games, dicing, tables, Shove-groat, and Nine Men's Morris. Bowling and tennis were brought within the precinct of the alehouses with royal licenses to erect courts and greens.³⁵ Alehouses and tippling houses were supposed to close by nine at night, but bribery kept the gaming-rooms of many of the lower kinds of alehouses and taverns open for twenty-four hours.³⁶

The growth rate of alehouses and consequently gaming was especially high in the towns and cities of Stuart

³³ Ashley, Life in Stuart England, p. 35.

³⁴ Bridenbaugh, Vexed and Troubled Englishmen: 1590-1642, p. 388.

³⁵ Peter Clark, "The Alehouse and the Alternative Society," in Puritans and Revolutionaries: Essays in Seventeenth-century History Presented to Christopher Hill, edited by Donald Pennington and Keith Thomas (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 63.

³⁶ Burke, English Night-Life from Norman Curfew to Present Black-out, p. 1.

England. In 1618, London magistrates spoke of "the multitude of alehouses and victualling houses within this city increasing daily."³⁷ This growth can be attributed in part, to a rural to urban migration, poverty, and the erosion of the community's focus on the local church.³⁸

Under the early Stuart monarchs, the Puritan authorities in London managed to control many of the alehouses within their jurisdictions; however, they were thwarted in their petitions to James I and Charles I to suppress the entertainments across the river from London in Southwark.³⁹ The Puritan cause progressed when unlicensed tipplers in the kingdom were firmly suppressed by Charles I. Persistent offenders were even taken to the jails. The turmoil of the Civil War allowed some relaxation of the control of gaming in the alehouses and taverns, but by 1650, Puritan magistrates and preachers were allied to suppress the vices in alehouses. Since many of the regulations issued during the Protectorate were revamped versions of statutes already in force, their effect was

³⁷Peter Clark, "The Alehouse and the Alternative Society," pp. 50-53.

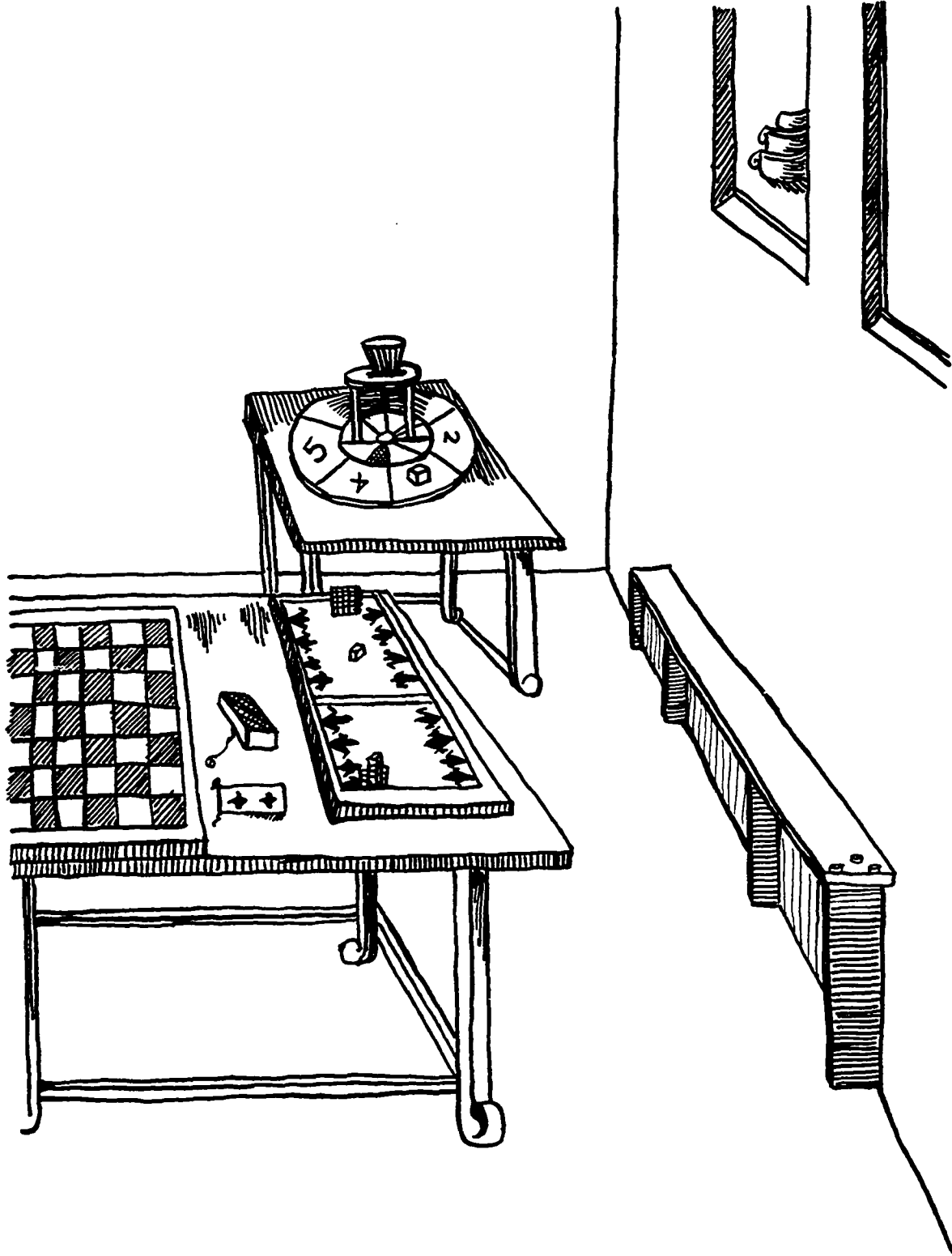
³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Fox, Shakespeare's England, p. 63 and Melville Bell Grosvenor and Franc Shor, eds., This England (Chicago: R. R. Donnelley & Sons Co., 1966), p. 118.

Plate III.*

THE GAMING ROOM OF AN ORDINARY

*Lilly Stone, English Sports and Recreations, n. p.



negligible.⁴⁰

Four months after the Restoration of Charles II, a Proclamation was issued, "for suppressing disorderly frequenting of taverns and tippling houses, or remaining there after nine at night" ⁴¹ However, taverns and tippling houses continued to multiply and the licentious behavior in them increased perhaps in porportion to that of the court.

Among the nobility and gentry of Stuart England the gaming houses were more popular than the alehouses for serious gaming. These ordinaries, as they were termed, were licensed by the Crown. James I continued the Tudor tradition of granting licenses to keep a gaming house in the form of courtier's patents. ⁴²

Under the early Stuarts, these houses were the most fashionable resort of the gentlemen and gentlewomen of the age. Here tennis, bowls, cards, tables, dice and other games could be played for a small fee. ⁴³ In some

⁴⁰Peter Clark, "The Alehouse and the Alternative Society," pp. 69-70.

⁴¹Calendar of State Papers, Domestic of the Reign of Charles II, 29 September 1660, 1:278.

⁴²R. J. Mitchell and M. D. R. Leys, A History of the English People (London: Pan Books Ltd., 1967),

⁴³Bridenbaugh, Vexed and Troubled Englishmen, p. 114.

public ordinaries, there were partitions separating the tables so that the people at one did not overlook the other, and privacy was assured for those who wanted to indulge in dicing games.⁴⁴ If the gaming house was sufficiently spacious, dancing was allowed on holidays.⁴⁵

One of the most popular ordinaries in London was Piccadilly Hall established under license by Robert Baker in 1623.⁴⁶ Clarendon described the hall as:

. . . a fair house for entertainment and gaming, and handsome gravel walks with shade, and where were an upper and a lower bowling-green, whither very many of the nobility and gentry of the best quality resorted, both for exercise and conversation.⁴⁷

During the Civil War, the Puritans as anxious to curb the vice in gaming-houses as in alehouses and taverns, closed Piccadilly Hall and quartered troops there.⁴⁸ With the

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 197.

⁴⁵Malcolmson, Popular Recreations in English Society, pp. 71-72.

⁴⁶Elizabeth Burton, The Jacobeans at Home, pp. 299-300. Originally this gaming house was located away from the bustle of the metropolis. Today, Piccadilly is one of the major streets of downtown London.

⁴⁷Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England Begun in the Year 1641, 1:318.

⁴⁸Elizabeth Burton, The Jacobeans at Home, pp. 200-300.

accession of Charles II, the Hall was re-opened and new gaming houses were built in Lincoln's Inn Fields.⁴⁹

The more elegant gaming houses built after 1660 furnished free and lavish dinners in addition to the most popular games of the period. Under the later Stuarts, these included Hazard, Primero, Gleek, Bassett and Whist. In many houses play went on all night.⁵⁰ In the reign of Queen Anne one of the topics of the day was the unbounded luxury of the ordinaries.⁵¹ Other complaints against the ordinaries, or Academies as they later came to be called, centered on the improbity rampant in the gaming-houses. Whereas the alehouse and tavern were generally the retreats of the plebeian gamester, the Academy was the rendezvous of the professional.

Tom Brown in Amusements Serious and Comical and Other Works, provides later generations with this interesting account of an ordinarie.

In some places they call gaming-houses Academies; but I know not why they should

⁴⁹Allen Andrews, The Royal Whore: Barbara Villers, Countess of Castlemaine (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Co., 1970), p. 45.

⁵⁰Burke, English Night-Life from Norman Curfew to Present Black-out, p. 3.

⁵¹A. S. Turberville, ed. Johnson's England: An Account of the Life and Manners of his Age, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), 1:181.

inherit that honourable name, since there's nothing to be learned there, unless it be sleight of hand, which is sometimes at the expence of all our money to get that of other men by fraud and cunning. The persons that meet are generally men of an infamous character, and are in various shapes, habits, and employments. Sometimes they are squires or the pad, and now and then borrow a little money upon the King's highway to recruit their losses at the gaming-house; and when a hue-and cry is out to apprehend them, they are as safe in one of these houses as a priest at the alter, and practise the old trade of cross-biting cullies, assisting the frail square dye with high and low fullums, and other napping tricks, in comparison with whom the common bilkers and pickpockets are a very honest society.⁵²

The literature elucidating the evil of gaming-houses began in the Tudor period with George Whetstone's work in 1585, titled An Addition or Touchstone for the times; exposing the dangerous Mischiefes, that the dycing Houses (commonly called) Ordinarie Tables, and other (like) Sanctuaries of Iniquitie do dayly breede within the Bowelles of the famous Citie of London. Whetstone calculated that London had more ordinaries "to honor the devyll, then churches to serve the living God."⁵³

⁵²Brown, Amusements Serious and Comical and Other Works, pp. 54-55.

⁵³The Complete Illustrated Shakespeare, ed. Howard Staunton 3 vols. (1860; reprint ed., New York: Park Lane, 1979), 1:101.

Sometimes the expose of gaming-houses was assisted by the popular playwrights of the day. Massinger's character, Sir Giles Overreach, was a disgraceful money-lender who operated in gaming-houses and obtained the forfeiture of bonds, estates, and homes mortgaged to him by unwary debtors infatuated with the turn of the card and the roll of the dice.⁵⁴ A Disswasive of Gaming, by Josiah Woodward was a popular work denouncing gaming. The numerous editions of Woodward's work were countered with 'A Modest Defense of Gaming.' The anonymous author of this work quoted the classics and treated the subject with a scholarly, subtle humor.⁵⁵

When the aristocracy of Stuart England wanted to game away from the public eye, they could retire to a club. The end of the sixteenth or beginning of the seventeenth century marked the establishment of clubs. Under James I, it was generally acknowledged that each element of Stuart society had its favorite alehouse or tavern.

⁵⁴ Lucy Aikin, Memoirs of the Court of King James the First, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1822), 1:81.

⁵⁵ Hargrave, A History of Playing Cards and Bibliography of Cards and Gaming, p. 207.

The Gentry to the King's Head,
 The nobles to the Crown,
 The Knights unto the Golden Fleece,
 And to the Plough the Clown . . .⁵⁶
 - Thomas Heywood (1608)

However, these gatherings were not called "clubs" until after the Restoration. Meanwhile, the popularity of coffee-houses continued under the Commonwealth.⁵⁷

After 1650, a relaxation of manners allowed coffee-houses to become prominent places of social intercourse. Although the coffee-house was open to all ranks of humanity, regulations against swearing and quarrels were imposed to prevent the better class from being annoyed.

To keep the house more quiet and from
 blame;
 We banish hence cards, dice, and every
 game;
 Nor can allow of wagers, that exceed
 Five shillings, which oft times do
 troubles breed; . . .⁵⁸

From the verse above, one can conclude that gambling, coupled with, or exclusive of gaming, was still a popular pastime. The betting books of clubs recorded wagers on births, deaths, marriages, length of life, the last scandal at court or the chance of a bill being passed by Parliament.

⁵⁶Timbs, Clubs and Club Life in London, p. 299.

⁵⁷Fraser, Cromwell: The Lord Protector, p. 475.

⁵⁸Timbs, Clubs and Club Life in London, pp. 272-273.

It appears that almost any event was a suitable occasion for placing a bet.⁵⁹

The spread of coffee-houses was augmented after the Restoration with the introduction and popularity of chocolate-drinking. However, Charles II labeled the coffee-houses the haunts of "idle and disaffected persons," and he issued a proclamation for their suppression.⁶⁰ The monarch was unsuccessful in his attempt and coffee-houses continued to flourish. An entry in the diary of Captain Dangerfield illustrates how prominent alehouses and coffee-houses were in the daily life of a seventeenth-century English aristocrat.

Fryday, December 26, 1684

We went to the Pheasant-Tavern, and Drank two Bottles of Sack; after which I went home to the Raven to Dinner; then after I had Slept a little I went to the coffee-house, where I found a deal of good Company, with whom I stay'd, and play'd at Back-Gammon and Hazzard untill two a Clock the Next Morning.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 99.

⁶⁰Arthur Bryant, King Charles the Second (London: Longmans, Green & Company, 1931), p. 247 and Alan Wykes, "The English Club," British History Illustrated Vol. 1 No. 5 (1974): 44.

Expences

Lost at Hazzard at the Coffee-house
15s. 0.⁶¹

The proprietors of the more prominent coffee-houses harbored the high-stake gamblers and accepted fees to keep the doors closed to all members of the public not approved by a committee of regular patrons. Those who tried to penetrate an existing assembly found that the coffee-house (and tavern) clubs were based on the exclusiveness of profession, class, wealth, politics, gambling or sport. Often, those rejected by existing clubs merely established new clubs to suit their own tastes.⁶²

Having exclusive playing areas was a prerogative fully exercised by the nobility in the seventeenth century.⁶³ Rochester and Buckingham exercised this right when they bought a tavern on the edge of London, and settled in as hosts of their own club, thus insuring a constant welcome for both themselves and their acquaintances.⁶⁴ The

⁶¹Douglas G. Greene, comp., Diaries of the Popish Plot: Being the Diaries of Israel Tonge, Sir Robert Southwell, John Joyne, Edmund Warcup, and Thomas Dangerfield; and Including Titus Oates's "A True Narrative of the Horrid Plot" (1679) (Delmar, New York: Scholars' Facsimilies and Reprints, 1977), p. 137.

⁶²Wykes, "The English Club," pp. 44-46.

⁶³Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, p. 52.

⁶⁴David Allen, "Political Clubs in Restoration London," History Journal Vol. 19 No. 3 (September 1976): 562-563.

monarchs themselves were also members of clubs; Charles II was an honorary member of The King's Head Club and William III helped establish The Kit Kat Club in 1699.⁶⁵

In Queen Anne's reign the elite of London society assembled at White's Chocolate House on St. James's Street.⁶⁶ The play at White's was notorious. The club which had formed in the private, sumptuous rooms upstairs was labeled a "pit of destruction" and 'the bane of English aristocracy.'⁶⁷ At White's the losing of a thousand pounds at hazard attracted no attention. Harley complained to Swift that young noblemen were fleeced and corrupted by fashionable gamblers and profligates at White's. Many aristocrats dreaded that a descendant might become a member of White's and lose their ancestral home.⁶⁸

⁶⁵Timbs, Clubs and Club Life in London, p. 47.

⁶⁶Charles II's proclamation against coffee-houses had been directed more against political opposition than gamesters. Charles II's opponets found the coffee-houses convenient for circulating anti-Royalist petitions. After Charles II's directive was published, the pamphleteers retreated into the townhouse of the Earl of Shaftesbury where Whiggery was established. White's was the resort of their opposition, the Tories.

⁶⁷Boulton, The Amusements of Old London, 1:133-136 and Trevelyan, England under Queen Anne: Blenheim, p. 82.

⁶⁸Ibid.

It was also during Queen Anne's reign that clubs became popular in the ports, large towns and spas outside of London.⁶⁹

There were several other areas in London where public gaming occurred. During the Stuart era these included the theater. Noblemen were allowed to hire a stool for six-pence and sit upon the stage playing at cards before the performance commenced.⁷⁰ Members of the aristocracy also recreated with card games on their barges as they crossed the Thames.⁷¹

In the seventeenth century drinking the waters from medicinal springs was the rage and spas, with their gaming facilities, were built to accomodate the aristocrats who flocked to the springs. In 1629, a visit by Queen Henrietta Maria popularized the Tunbridge Wells. The number of resorts increased rapidly as the craze continued; by 1645, Epsome was the weekend resort for Londoners.

Epsome was typical of most of the spas of the period. It retained its respectability throughout the Stuart reign. The spa was the favorite refuge of the noted traveler

⁶⁹Burke, English Night-Life from Norman Curfew to Present Black-out, p. 21.

⁷⁰Thornbury, Shakespeare's England, 1:107.

⁷¹D'Aulnoy, Memoirs of the Court of England in 1675, p. 10.

Celia Fiennes, and in 1701, it boasted two bowling greens, an upper Green with "little shoppes and a gameing or danceing-roome," and a lower Green "not far off, just in the heart of town, . . . the whole side of this is a very large room . . . with two hazard-boards."⁷²

Hamilton also confirmed the extent of the gaming at spas when he recorded this passage:

Near all these places of diversion [spas] there is usually a sort of inn, or house of entertainment; . . . Here the rooks meet every evening to drink, smoke and to try their skill upon each other, or, in other words, to endeavour to trick one another out of the winnings of the day. These rooks are, . . . men who always carry money about them, to enable them to lend to losing gamesters, for which they receive a gratification, which is nothing for such as play deep, as it is only two percent and the money to be repaid the next day.⁷³

After the Restoration, the most popular spa and resort for gaming was Bath. Play at Bath developed for over a half a century until it culminated into a fine art nurtured by Beau Nash in Queen Anne's reign. Beau Nash accepted the position of social director of Bath in 1706. Nash made gaming a democratic institution;

⁷²The Journeys of Celia Fiennes, ed. Christopher Morris (New York: Chanticleer Press, 1949), pp. 349-350.

⁷³Anthony Hamilton, Memoirs of Count Grammont, p. 365.

private parties were discouraged, and all classes were mixed irrespective of their social positions at home. Here, the gaming-table proved to be a great equalizer; especially since all the sharpers from London and the Continent journeyed to Bath. All amusements ended at 11:00 P.M.⁷⁴

Instead of receiving a salary for his office, Nash received a two and a half per cent commission from the gaming at each of the tables. In 1745, when public gaming was suppressed by law, Nash suffered a great loss and private clubs grew more popular.⁷⁵

Public gaming was also popular at the horse-racing tracks in Stuart England. Horse-breeding and racing developed at Newmarket under the patronage of James I. Public races continued in the reign of Charles I, and after the Restoration royal race tracks were built at Newmarket.⁷⁶ Charles II favored Newmarket where betting on horses occurred in the day and gaming at night. When the later Stuarts moved the court to Newmarket the Groom Porter

⁷⁴Burke, English Night-Life from Norman Curfew to Present Black-out, pp. 29-31.

⁷⁵Turberville, Johnson's England, 1:214.

⁷⁶Hole, English Sports and Pastimes, p. 27.

supervised the betting on the races.⁷⁷ As in other dominions of gaming, the astrologers were present to offer advice on which horse would win. One of the more prominent of these was Pregnani, the soothsayer of the French Court. Charles II wrote:

I came from Newmarket the day before yesterday, . . . L'Abbe Pregnani was there most part of the time, and I believe will give you some account of it, but not that he lost his money upon confidence that the stars could tell which horse would win. For he had the ill luck to foretell three times wrong together, and James Duke of Monmouth believed him so much as he lost his money upon the same score.⁷⁸

Charles himself gave "little credit to such kind cattle" as astrologers.⁷⁹

Charles II often moved the court to Newmarket for a few weeks in the autumn and spring. There, the Duchess of Mazarin and the Duchess of Cleveland, mistresses of Charles, each established their own gambling houses where fortunes changed hands at cards in the course of a single

⁷⁷Mary Cathcart Borer, People of Stuart England (London: MacDonald Educational & Co. Ltd., 1968), p. 150 and Pepys, Diary, 3:293.

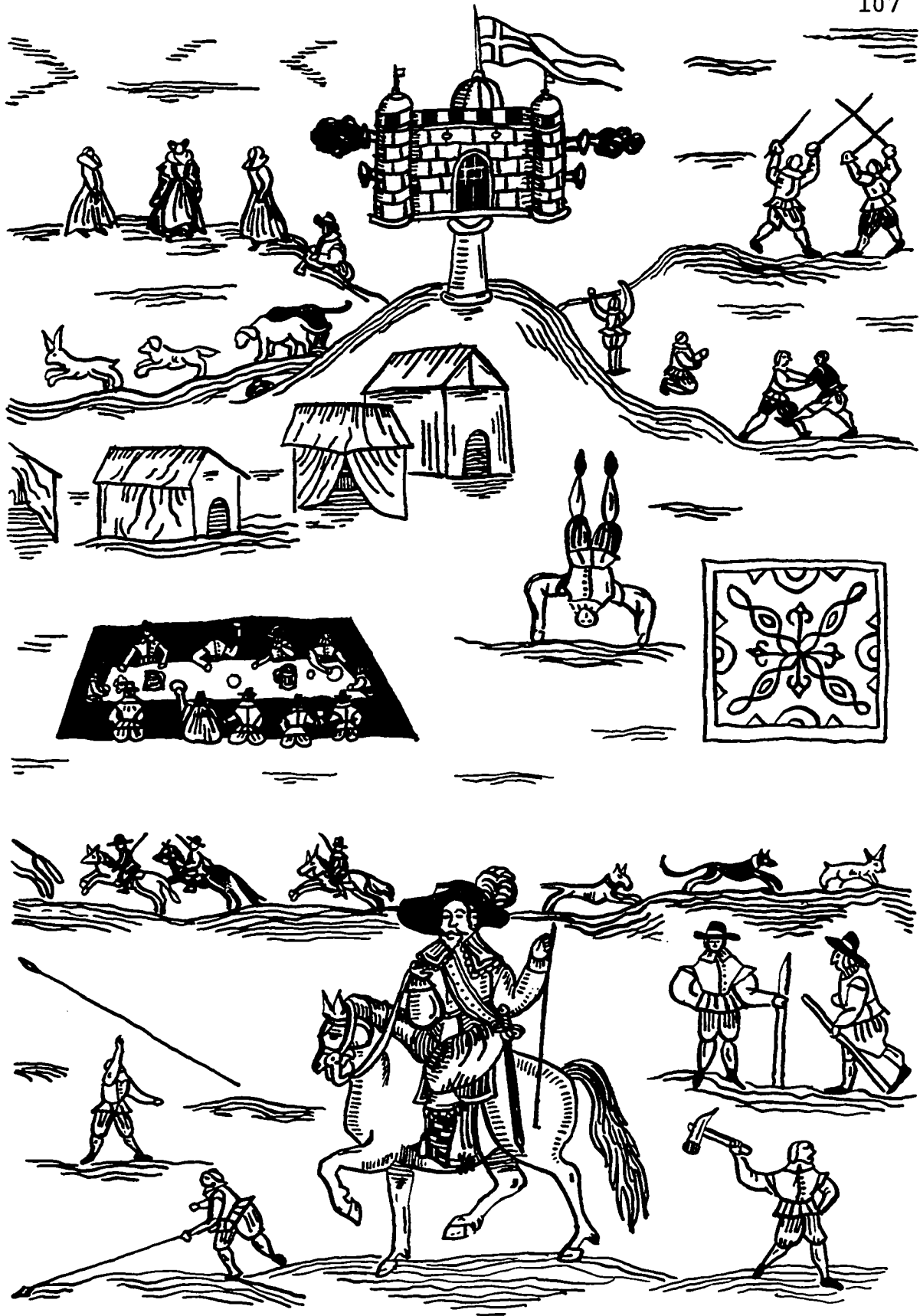
⁷⁸The Letters, Speeches and Declarations of King Charles II, ed. Sir Arthur Bryant (London: Cassell, 1968), p. 232. Charles to his sister Henriette Marie, March 22, 1668/9.

⁷⁹J. N. P. Watson, Captain-General and Rebel Chief: The Life of James, Duke of Monmouth (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1979), pp. 32-33.

Plate IV.*

ROBERT DOVER'S COTSWALD GAMES

* Lilly Stone, English Sports and Recreations, n. p.



night.⁸⁰

William III attended the horse races on every possible occasion. He bet on a grand scale and when he lost he flew into tantrums.⁸¹ Queen Anne was also fond of horse-racing. In her reign so many fortunes were won and lost at the racetrack that it was illegal to win or lose more than £10 on any one event.⁸²

Throughout the seventeenth century gaming was a part of the events at local and national fairs. One of the most important of these was the Cotswold Games revived and restyled in 1608 by "Captain" Robert Dover. The annual gaming fair was sanctioned by James I and designed to attract the English gentry. The Cotswold Games included both sporting events like bowling and traditional games such as chess which were located inside tents. In 1636, a book of poems titled Annalia Dubrensia praised both "Captain" Dover and the Cotswold Games.⁸³

⁸⁰ Borer, People of Stuart England, p. 150 and Wymer Sport in England: A History of Two Thousand Years of Games and Pastimes, pp. 103-104.

⁸¹ Wymer, Sport in England, p. 105.

⁸² Ibid., pp. 105-108.

⁸³ Lilly Stone, English Sports and Recreations, p. 8 and Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, pp. 103-104.

The fairs were the particular province of astrologers, conjurers and tregetours who were especially adapt at gaming. Tregetours were artists who, with slight-of-hand and the assistance of machinery, created illusions which were quite credible in an era which believed in enchantment and witchcraft.⁸⁴ James I classified tregetours as agents of the Devil,

who will learne them many juglarie tricks, at cardes and dice, to deceive men's senses thereby, and such innumerable false practiques, which are proved by over-many in this age. ⁸⁵

James I's opinion was published in response to Reginald Scot's book Discoverie of Witchcraft (1584). In this popular book Scot devoted one third of its contents to explaining how card tricks, slight-of-hand performances and magical illusions were created. Scot wrote:

. . . I thought good to discover it, together with the rest of the other deceitful arts; being sorie that it falleth out to my lot, to laie open the secrets of this mysterie, to the hinderance of such poore men as live thereby: whose dooings herein are not onlie tolerable, but greatlie commendable. . . .⁸⁶

⁸⁴Thornbury, Shakespere's England, 1:152.

⁸⁵Joseph Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 170.

⁸⁶Scot, The Discoverie of Witchcraft, pp. 262-263.

The tricks Scot exposed included "how to tell what card anie man thinketh" and "how to make one drawe the same or anie card you list."⁸⁷ Scot also endeavored to separate gaming and witchcraft. Although he failed in his attempt to negate the belief in witchcraft, Scot's popular book helped to educate Englishmen so that when the third edition of the work was issued in 1665 most aristocrats believed that witchcraft was a product of the imagination.

However, Scot's book did not deter the tregetours or the majority of the public. In The Flying Post of August 6-8, 1702 we find this order issued against tregetours, astrologers and so forth at Bartholomew Fair.

The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor and Court of Alderman have issued out their Order, for suppressing the Disorders of the approaching Bartholomew-Fair, prohibiting all Booths, Sheds, and Stalls, to be Lett, for acting Stage-Plays, Interludes, Comedies, Gaming-Places, Lotteries, Musick-Meetings, or other Opportunities for inticing and assembling loose and disorderly Persons &c. under the Pretence of innocent Diversion and Recreation, &c.⁸⁸

One can conclude that by the end of the Stuarts' reigns the areas of gaming had expanded throughout England. Clubs, spas and horse racing were all institutions which

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 274.

⁸⁸William Bragg Ewald, Jr., Rogues, Royalty and Reporters: The Age of Queen Anne through its Newspapers (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1978), p. 170.

developed in the seventeenth century and served to increase the opportunities for gaming. The more traditional locales for gaming including the Groom Porter's, alehouses, taverns, ordinaries and fairs continued and even expanded throughout the century. In addition, gaming in private homes and at the universities continued uninterrupted, though the extent of this gaming is hard to document.

On Henry Bowling

If gentleness could tame the fates, or wit
Delude them, Bowling had not died yet;
But one that death o'rules in judgement sits,
And saies our sins are stronger than our witts.

- Richard Corbett^{*}

CHAPTER V

ADULT GAMES IN STUART ENGLAND: BILLIARDS, BOARD GAMES, BOWLING, TENNIS AND TRADITIONAL GAMES

One of the most elementary forms of gaming is reflected in the competitive zero-sum game of pure opposition.

Competition may be described as the active contest between people who pursue the same objective at the same time. The ends sought cannot be obtained in equal amounts by all contestants. The pay-offs are unequal.¹

In the competitive game an atmosphere of equality of

^{*}The Poems of Richard Corbett (1599-16), eds., J. A. W. Bennett and H. R. Trevor-Roper (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1955), p. 74. In his poem, Corbett is referring to James I's eldest son, Prince Henry, who died in 1612 at the age of eighteen.

¹Judith E. Fisher, "Competition and Gaming: An Experimental Study," Simulation and Games, Vol. 7, No. 3, September 1976, pp. 321-322.

chances is created. Games of skill may also quickly become games of competitive skill or strategy as they devise a rivalry that is limited, regulated and specialized.² As noted above, there was a wide variety of competitive games played in Stuart England. Many of these games were popular with both children and adults. Several games played by the nobility and gentry of seventeenth-century England utilized specific gaming areas or apparatus. An account of the more popular games follows.

Gaming is usually regarded as a useless or inconsequential activity, which can provide a non-material reward through enjoyment in a pleasant and imaginative pastime.³ In seventeenth-century England, however, there was no form of gaming activity which the nobility did not contrive to turn into a subject of financial speculation.⁴ The gambling mania which possessed Stuart England was reflected in the frequency of the bets offered and taken on the outcome of board games, tennis matches and the other competitive games.

²Caillois, Man, Play, and Games, pp. 14-16 and pp. 37-38.

³Caillois, Man, Play, and Games, p. 84 and J. Nina Lieberman, Playfulness: Its Relationship to Imagination and Creativity (New York: Academic Press, 1977), p. 14.

⁴Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641, p. 568.

The frequent illusions to cheating in Stuart literature coupled with the descriptions of cheating techniques in gaming manuals from the same period indicate that cheating at gaming was an acceptable way of life. Stuart gamblers engaged in cheating to insure a return on their investment in the bidding. Profitability in any endeavor was viewed as a positive benefit which reflected the businesslike economy developing in the seventeenth century.

Billiards Games

BILLIARDS. Billiards was a popular game among the nobility in seventeenth century England. It was described as a "gentile, cleanly and most ingenious game" in Charles Cotton's book The Compleat Gamester, (1674).⁵

The origins of Billiards is still disputed today. Joseph Strutt believed the game was derived from a bowling game where the balls were driven with a baton or mace, through an arch, towards a mark at a distance from it and that the game was transferred from the ground to the table.⁶ Strutt also credited the French with inventing the game on the basis of the word, billiard, which in French means a stick with a curved end. Strutt's editor Charles Cox,

⁵Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 12.

⁶Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 219 and p. 239.

in the 1903 edition of his book, stated that the game was probably of English not French origins.⁷

By contrast, Cotton in 1674 acknowledged two countries as the source of Billiards. In "The Explanation of the Frontispiece", Cotton wrote "Billiards from Spain at first deriv'd its name;" later while describing the rules of the game he penned ". . . Billiards had its first original from Italy."⁸

Public billiard tables were in all of the major towns of Stuart England, but the game remained the province of the noble and genteel families. The expense of the tables and implements was a restriction for many would-be owners of billiard tables. The Earl of Bedford recorded spending £25 3s. 3d. on a billiards table, balls and cues.⁹ Billiards was also a sport of the Stuart monarchs. John Reeve was paid ". . . 22£. 10s. for billiard sticks and ivory balls, &c; furnished for his Majesty, May 17, 1641."¹⁰

Aside from the expense of the table, the owner also had to have an extra room to accomodate the table. In 1677, Evelyn was impressed with magnificently furnished

⁷Ibid., p. 239.

⁸Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. xxi and p. 12.

⁹Thomson, Life in a Noble Household: 1641-1700, p. 237.

¹⁰Great Britain, Public Record Office, Calender of State Papers, Domestic, of the Reign of Charles II, vol. 2 (1661-1662): 2 February 1662, Entry Book 5, p. 148.

Gallery which held Charles II's billiard table at Euston.¹¹

The demands of an upper-class obsessed with a desire for conspicuous expenditure and luxury goods were appeased in part with the purchase and display of expensive gaming apparatus like Billiard tables, balls and cues.¹² Stuart aristocrats knew that a large number of ornamental gaming pieces could give an impression of prosperity.¹³

The game of Billiards was played quite differently from that of today. The game was played on a rectangular-shaped table covered with green cloth; ". . . the finer and more freed from knots the better."¹⁴ The table was railed around the top with a ledge stuffed with fine flock (wool) or cotton. The table also had three holes, termed hazards, on each side with a net or wooden box to catch the ball. At one end was placed a small ivory arch called the 'port', and at the other end a kind of ivory peg, known as the 'king'. The players used sticks of weighted wood (preferably Brasile or Lignum vitae), tipped

¹¹Evelyn, Diary, p. 4:116.

¹²Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641, pp. 585-586.

¹³Ibid. p. 42.

¹⁴Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 12.

with ivory and bent at one end; both ends of the stick were used.¹⁵ The game was confined to only two balls usually ivory but occasionally wood.¹⁶

The object of the game was to pass the ball through the port and to then touch the king without knocking it down. The skill lay in thwarting your opponent's attempts to accomplish the same goal, without incurring any penalties which might occur with a misdirected shot. For example, if you knocked your ball off the table or into one of the hazards you lost a point. Any player who broke the king was required to pay a shilling, if he broke the port, ten shillings, and if he cracked a stick five shillings. Five ends (points) made a game by daylight, seven ends were needed if odds were given. Three ends constituted a game by candle-light. Presumably the game was easier to play under better lighting.¹⁷

The "cleanly pastime" of Billiards had laws or orders against "lolling slovingly players."¹⁸ You could not lay your hand on the table or let your sleeve drag upon it.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 12-14.

¹⁶Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 240.

¹⁷Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 13-17

¹⁸Ibid., p. 14.

Smokers were discouraged; anyone who let his pipe ash fall on the table and burn the cloth forfeited the game. A bystander who spoke during the game without having been asked his opinion was requested to leave the room or forfeit two pence. All controversies were decided by the spectators.¹⁹

Cotton encouraged playing at Billiards as it was largely devoid of cheat and a "pure art." However, Cotton cautioned potential players to inspect the table for levelness and thus protect themselves from rogues who may know the windings and tricks of the table, and shamefully beat a good gamester.²⁰

As with nearly all pastimes in Stuart England, wagers were staked on the outcome of the game. Pepys won an angel at Billiards and late in the seventeenth century there were gamesters like the Marquis de Guiscard who specialized in winning large sums of money by betting at billiards.²¹

The popularity of Billiards declined in the reigns

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 14-18.

²⁰Ibid., p. 12.

²¹Pepys, Diary, 6:220, September 11, 1665, and Lucas, Lives of the Gamesters, p. 223.

of the later Stuarts because of:

. . . spunging caterpillars which swarm where any billard-tables are set up, . . . they wait for ignorant cullies to be their customers; their kitching, for from hence comes the major part of their provision, drinking and smoaking being their common sustenance; and when they can perswade no more persons to play at table, they make it their dormitory, and sleep under it; . . . they dream of nothing but Hazards, being never out of them, of passing and repassing, which may be fitly applied to their lewd lives, which makes them continually pass from one prison to another till their lives are ended. . . .²²

The nobility of the late seventeenth century also preferred to lose their money at the card-table rather than the billiard-table.

TRUCKS. Trucks was an Italian game popular in Spain and Ireland and similar to Billiards. In Cotton's opinion the game was more boisterous and less gentile. The tables were rarely met with in England; a truck-table was at least three feet longer than a billard-table with three holes at each end and ten holes at each side. The Argolio was a hoop of iron fixed to the table where the port stood at Billiards. The Sprigg was another tall piece of iron, attached to the spot where the king stood in Billiards. The ivory balls and Tacks (sticks) were larger

²²Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 18.

than those in Billiards. The small end of the Tack was round; the large end had a flat edge; both ends were covered with iron, brass or silver.²³ Good players usually used the small end of the stick.²⁴

Evelyn played Trucks at the Portuguese Ambassador's house where the object of the game was;

. . . onely to prosecute the ball til hazarded, without passing the port or touching the pin, If one misse hitting the ball every time, the game is lost, or if hazarded: and 'tis more difficult to hazard a ball though so many, than in our Tables, by reason the board is made so exactly Even, and the Edges not stuff'd: . . .²⁵

Cotton advised players of Trucks to let bystanders judge any controversy and to avoid a quarrel because the Tacks were so strong and heavy they could dash a man's brains out.²⁶ This fact may have accounted for the decline of the game in England. The description of Trucks was repeated in the 1676, 1680 and 1710 editions of The Compleat Gamester, but not in the later issues of the eighteenth century.²⁷

²³Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 19 and Evelyn, Diary, 4:190, December 4, 1679.

²⁴Evelyn, Diary, 4:190, December 4, 1679.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 21.

²⁷Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 241.

Board Games

Board games were a popular indoor pastime among the aristocrats of Stuart England. Tables was the term used to designate board games, especially those games of mixed chance and skill which used dice to determine the number and direction of the moves of each player. However, the word does not derive from the table or board on which the game was played, but from the pieces (tabulae) which were moved on the board.²⁸

Northbrooke spoke for many Puritans when he passed this judgement on playing board games:

Playing at Tables is farre more tollerable (although in all respectes not allowable) than Dyce and Cards are for that it leanth partlye to chaunce, and partly to industrie of the mynde. For although they call in deede of chaunce, yet the calles are governed by industrie and witte.²⁹

BACKGAMMON, TABLES. In Backgammon, all the pieces were moved around the board along the points according to the throw of the dice. Black pieces and white pieces

²⁸Paul G. Brewster, "Games and Sports in Shakespeare," in The Study of Games, by Elliott M. Avedon and Brian Sutton-Smith (New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1971), p. 45.

²⁹Northbrooke, A Treatise, p. 111.

traveled in opposite directions, and the object was to be the first to get all your men into your home table. The numbers on the dice were considered individually and thus allowed the movement of two pieces at a time. A throw of doubles meant that you could move the pieces four times. One could move forward onto any unoccupied point but, if the opponent had two or more men on the point one could not land on that point. If only one piece was on a point than that piece was vulnerable and could be taken off the board if an opponent's piece landed on the same point. One then had to roll 1:2 to place his piece back on the playing board so that the piece could proceed back home and one had a chance to win.³⁰

Cotton's Compleat Gamester provided a guide to betting in Backgammon. The betting was: single stakes if one's men were all home; double the original stakes (Gammon) if the opponent still had some of his pieces in your inner table or out of the game (placed on the bar). Finally, if one had gotten his pieces home by throwing doubles and the opponent had pieces on the bar or in your inner table then the stakes were quadrupled.³¹

³⁰ Arthur R. Taylor, Pub Games (St Albans: Mayflower Books Ltd., 1976), pp. 215-217.

³¹ Taylor, Pub Games, p. 217 and Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 75.

Cotton warned his readers to beware of the false dice used in Backgammon; ". . . wherefore have a special care that you had not Cinque-Deuces and Quater-Treys put upon you, you may quickly perceive it by the running of the dice."³² Innocent players could often be cozened by topping or knapping opponents.³³

Major Clancy, one seventeenth century profligate, was accomplished at both of these cheating techniques. Topping was performed by pretending to put both dice into the box but in reality, the gamester still held one between his fingers which he would turn to his advantage. Knapping occurred when one held one of the dice still while the other bore the burden of the gaming. By using both of these techniques, Clancy won 6500 pounds at gaming in less than two years. Eventually most of the Stuart aristocrats were aware of his unscrupulous methods.³⁴

THE BOTTLE GAME. Dr. Thomas Hyde in De Ludis Orientalibus, (1694), described the Chinese game of Coan Ki. In this game each player had sixteen bottle-shaped pieces of a distinctive color arranged on a board of eight alternating

³³Ibid., pp. 75-76.

³⁴Lucas, Lives of the Gamesters, pp. 136-137.

colored lines. The moves of the bottles were controlled by the throws of two six-sided dice. The numbers on the dice were considered individually and certain throws had special significance. For example, on a throw of 1:1, a player had to remove one of his bottles and pay a tenth part of his wager to his opponent. Dr. Hyde's account does not mention what happened to a player who had lost a bottle on this throw. Presumably he continued with a slight advantage for which he had paid his opponent. The bottles were moved anti-clockwise from left to right across the spaces to the opponent's side of the board and then back to the player's own home base. The first to complete this task was the winner.³⁵

CHESS. Chess was one of the more skillful and complex board games. It was invented in northwest India around 570 A. D..³⁶ It was played in France in the eighth century where the Emperor Charlemagne was known to have a taste for chess. The English scholar Alcuin who visited the emperor from 790 to 793 may have been the first to introduce chess in England.³⁷

³⁵R. C. Bell, Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 12-14.

³⁶Brewster, "Games and Sports in Shakespeare," pp. 32-33.

³⁷Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 250.

In The Compleat Gamester, Chess was described as ". . . a Royal game and more difficult to be understood than any other game whatever."³⁸ The number of pieces (32) and the manner which they were arranged and moved on the grid board of 64 alternately light and dark squares does not appear to have undergone much alteration over the centuries. The names of the chess pieces were originally the King, the Queen, the Roc, the Alfin, the Knight and the Pawn. The Roc was incorrectly called a rook, though formerly it signified a rock or fortress; the Alfin was the Bishop.³⁹ In Restoration England, the Rook was interpreted as representing "the peasant or countryman."⁴⁰

The movements of the Chess pieces were construed to reflect the role of the piece in society. For example; "the knight. . . kills his enemies, guards his friends, and

³⁸Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 24. For the sake of brevity the rules of chess are not completely delineated here. The reader is referred to Cotton for a more thorough description of the game.

³⁹Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, pp. 251-252.

⁴⁰In espousing this interpretation of the Rook, Cotton was adhering to the popular seventeenth century theory that Chess was a game of military origins and what we would term today a "war game." Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 25.

checks the King of the adverse party," and the Bishop
 ". . . rebukes the adversary, guards his consorts, and
 checks the adverse king."⁴¹

The whole strategy of the game rested upon the attack and defense of the King. Each piece had a move peculiar to itself, and with the exception of the Pawns, any piece could capture and remove from the board any one of the opponent's pieces that it finds in its path, by capturing it and occupying the square on which the opponent's piece stood. It was not compulsory to capture the piece except in defense of a "check" on the King.⁴²

As with almost all games in Stuart England, wagers were placed on the outcome of the game. If one bet that he would checkmate the King he lost his stake if the game was a draw. One also lost his bet if he gave up the game before it was finished, without the consent of his adversary.⁴³

⁴¹Here, Cotton is again explaining the militaristic interpretation of Chess. Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 27.

⁴²Edmond Hoyle, Hoyle's Complete and Authoritative Book of Games, new ed. (Garden City, New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1934), p. 157.

⁴³Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 38. One wonders if Chess was such a popular game in England because of the militaristic function of the elite? The format of playing the game which consisted of guarding the King corresponded with the duties of the aristocrats.

There were a number of different games of Chess with such interesting names as The Ladies Game, Misfortunes Make a Man Think, Take if You Can and Bad Neighbour.⁴⁴ As with other popular games of the Stuart period, books were published to elucidate the strategies of these games of Chess. Petitions addressed the monarchs for permission to publish these books. One to which Charles II supposedly contributed was titled Four Chess Openings in which the Sicilian Defense is Employed and Nine Other Games of Chess, Some Being only Openings and some Finished Games.⁴⁵

The opinions on the value of Chess varied early in the seventeenth century. James I in his work Basilicon Doron, a guide for Henry Prince of Wales, recommended Chess as a moral indoor game for the "banishing of idleness, the mother of all vice."⁴⁶ But James I had mixed emotions about the actual worth of the game for relaxation; he believed Chess filled a person's head with troubles.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Charles I loved the "over-Philosophicall Follie" and it

⁴⁴Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, pp. 252-253.

⁴⁵Great Britain, Public Record Office, Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, of the Reign of Charles II: Addenda, vol. 28 (1660-1685): Undated, p. 503.

⁴⁶Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, p. 71.

⁴⁷Lilly Stone, English Sports and Recreations, p. 24.

was one of the games he enjoyed when he wintered in Oxford during the Civil Wars.⁴⁸

James I's negative view of Chess was not shared by John Hvarte. In Examen De Jngenio, (1616), Hvarte stated:

Chesse-play is one of the things which best discovereth the imagination: for hee that makes ten or twelve faire draughts one after another on the chesse-boord, gives an evill token of profiting in the Sciences which belong to the understanding, and to the memorie, . . .⁴⁹

According to Hvarte, not only was a person's academic inclinations revealed by his fate at the chess-board, but his ability to learn was also enhanced after a game of Chess.

He asserted:

. . . if you appoint him to doe an exercise of learning or disputation, within foure and

⁴⁸ Elizabeth Godfrey [Jesse Bedford], Social Life Under the Stuarts (London: Grant Richards, 1904), p. 30 and Ollard, The Image of the King: Charles I and Charles II, p. 30.

⁴⁹ John Hvarte, Examen de Jngenio: The Examination of Mens Wits. In Which, By Discovering the Variete of Natures, Is She Wed for What Prosession Each One Is Apt, and How Far He Shall Profit Therein, trans. M. Camillo Camilli and R. C. Esquire (London: Adam Flip for Thomas Adams, 1616), p. 112. This work was originally written in Spanish. It was translated into Italian and then eventually into English. Hvarte also espoused the militaristic interpretation of Chess. Most of the passage on Chess is devoted to an elaborate comparison between the soldiers and officers of a seventeenth century Spanish army and the pieces on a chess-board. It is uncertain how much Cotton was influenced by Hvarte's book since Chess was declining in popularity when Cotton penned The Compleat Gamester.

twentie houres after, a part of that excessive heat which he hath flieth to the heart, and so the braine remainth temperat, and in the disposition. . . many points woorth the utterance, present themselves to a man's remembrance.⁵⁰

During this same period the playwright Thomas Middleton wrote a satirical play called A Game at Chess, which was first acted at the Globe in 1624. Middleton wrote:

Prolouge

What of the game call'd Chess-play can be made
To make a stage-play, shall this day be play'd:
First you shall see the men in order set,
States and their Pawns, when both the sides are met,
The Houses well distinguish'd; in the game
Some men entrapt and taken to their shame,
Rewarded by their play; and, in the close,
You shall see check-mate given to virtue's foes:
But the fair'st jewel that our hopes can check,
Is so to play our game t' avoid your check.⁵¹

This play was written during the negotiations for Prince Charles' Spanish marriage. The play satirized the Papist (black chessmen) and idolized the Protestants. At the conclusion the black chessmen were checkmated and put in a bag. The Spanish ambassador, Gondomar complained to the authorities that the king of Spain was being ridiculed and dishonored on the stage. The play was suppressed and the author was imprisoned.⁵² Middleton, however, secured his release by presenting a rhymed petition to James I which

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 235.

⁵¹ The Works of Thomas Middleton, ed. A. H. Bullen, 8 vols. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1885), 7:7.

⁵² Brewster, "Games and Sports in Shakespeare," p.33.

read:

A harmless game, coyned only for delight,
 Was played betwixt the black house and
 and the white.
 The white house won - yet still the black
 doth brag,
 They had the power to put me in the bag,
 Use but your royal hand, 'twill set me
 free:
 'Tis but removing of a man, that's me.⁵³

The Puritan attitude towards Chess differed from that of most Jacobean courtiers who believed that Chess was a relatively pleasant pastime. The Puritans believed that too much gaming could be sinful and this extended to playing at Chess. In 1648, the Puritan Ralph Josselin, searched for an answer as to why his ten-day old son had died, recorded this passage in his diary:

As often times before, so on this day did I especially desire of God to discover and hint to my soule, what is the aime of the God of heaven more especially in this correction of his upon mee; and when I had seriously considered my heart, and wayes, and compared them with the affliction and sought unto God, my thoughts often fixed on thes particulars:

Whereas I have given my minde to unseasonable playing at chesse, now it run in my thoughts in my illnes as if I had beene at chesse; I shall be very sparing in the use of that recreacon and that at more convenient seasons.⁵⁴

⁵³ Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 253.

⁵⁴ Alan MacFarlane, The Family Life of Ralph Josselin: A Seventeenth-Century Clergyman; An Essay in Historical Anthropology (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1970), pp. 175-176.

Figure 1.*

Sedentary Games

First Row, left to right. Fox and Geese, Dice, Merelles

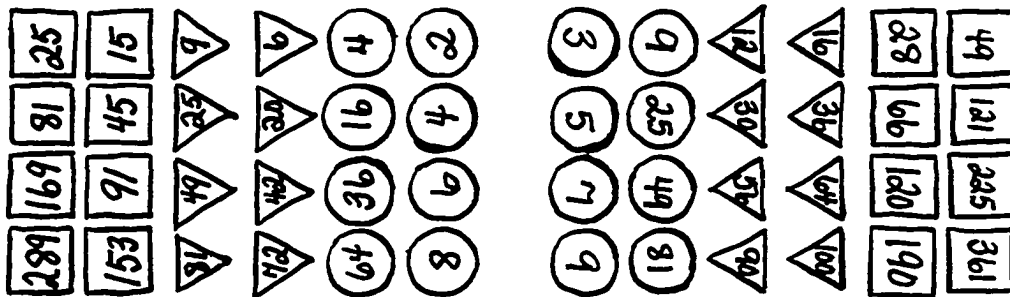
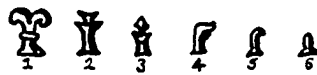
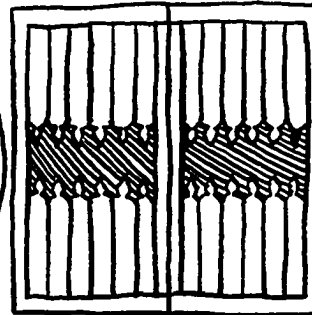
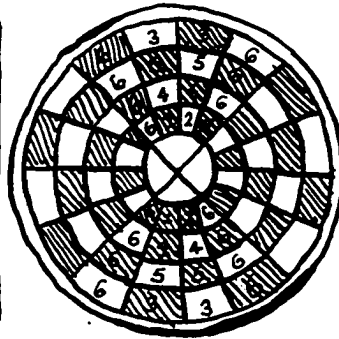
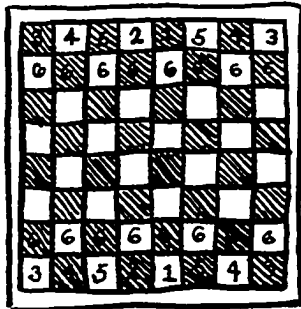
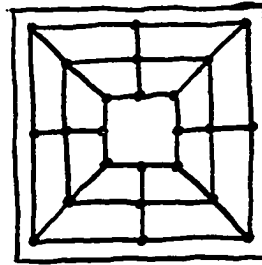
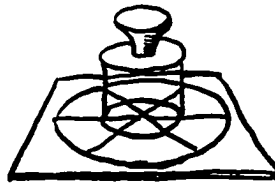
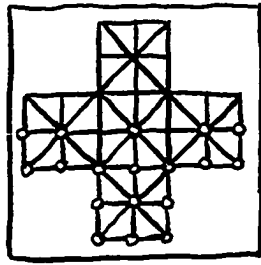
Second Row, left to right. Chess, Chess, Tables

Third Row, left to right. Chessmen,

1. King
2. Queen
3. Rock
4. Alfin
5. Knight
6. Pawn

Fourth Row, The Philosopher's Game

* Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, Illustration XXXIII, pp. 246-247.



It was not the sinful nature of Chess that accounted for its decline after the Restoration, but the difficulty of the game. Other factors included the length of the game, which could last a fortnight, and the tediousness of it.⁵⁵

DRAUGHTS (CHECKERS). Draughts was played on the same board as Chess and like Chess the game varied little from that of today. The term, Draughts, was derived from the verb to draw or to move.⁵⁶

In Draughts, each of the participant's twelve men (either light or dark in color) moved diagonally and were of equal value until they traversed the board and became kings, which could move in any direction. One captured his opponents's men by jumping over them into the vacant squares beyond. Unlike Chess, the participant must capture an opponent's man if the opportunity arose. To win one had to capture all the opponent's men.⁵⁷

Taverns and alehouses in Stuart England were known by their red lattices. A cross-bar ornament on the door-

⁵⁵Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 24.

⁵⁶Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 255.

⁵⁷Hoyle, Complete and Authoritative Book of Games, pp. 257-259.

post indicated that draught boards were kept inside.⁵⁸

DUBBLETS, DOUBLETS. This was a game from the Backgammon family. It used the same board and was played by two players with fifteen men each. The points on the backgammon board were known by their numbers, which corresponded to the faces of a die. In the seventeenth century these were called; ace point, deuce point, trey point, quater point, cinque point and sice point.⁵⁹

In Dubblets, one had to throw the corresponding number first before he could position his men on the corresponding point. Two men apiece were placed on the first three points, while three men were placed on points four through six. After one had all his men positioned on the board he could then move his men around the board in an attempt to be the first one to get all his men home. The name Dubblets was derived from the fact that doubles were worth fourfold in both the placement of men on the board and their movement around the board.⁶⁰

FOX AND GEESE. This game was popular in the fifteenth century when Edward IV ordered silver pieces for the

⁵⁸Thornbury, Shakespeare's England, 1:53.

⁵⁹Today these same points read 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, from left to right.

⁶⁰Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 78.

royal board.⁶¹ The game was still popular in the Stuart epoch but it appeared to have been making the transition from an aristocratic adult game to a lower-class or children's game.⁶²

The game was designed for two players. Pegs (or marbles) were placed on a board with thirty-six holes. Seventeen of the pieces were geese; the other piece of a different color was the fox. The object was for the geese to shut up the fox so he could not move. The fox was placed in the center hole and could move in any direction except diagonally. He could capture a goose by jumping over him. After 1600, the game changed and geese could move only forward or sideways one hole at a time, and they could not jump or capture the fox. At least six geese were required to pen the fox in a corner, so if the fox removed twelve geese he had in effect won the game.⁶³

⁶¹Taylor, Pub Games, p. 211.

⁶²Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, pp. 257-259.

⁶³Taylor, Pub Games, p. 212 and Alice Bertha Gomme, The Traditional Games of England, Scotland and Ireland: with Tunes, Singing-Rhymes and Methods of Playing, According to the Variants Extant and Recorded in Different Parts of the Kingdom, 2 vols., with an Introduction by Dorothy Howard (London: David Nutt, 1894, 1898; reprint ed., New York: Dover Publications, 1964), 1:141-142.

IRISH. Cotton wrote that Irish was an ingenious game which required a great deal of skill to learn to play.⁶⁴ Theophilus Lucas believed the game, which almost replicated Backgammon was invented in Ireland.⁶⁵ The only difference between Backgammon and Irish was that in the latter doubles on the dice were not counted fourfold. However, Cotton cautioned the player of Irish not to be too rash or forward in his movements around the board.⁶⁶

KETCH-DOLT, CATCH-DOLT. This was another game from the Backgammon family. It was popular in the sixteenth century. In this game none of the pieces were placed on the board until the participant had thrown the dice. For example, if the participant threw 1:6, he was allowed to place one piece from the pile on the respective point. If the participant's opponent then threw 1:4, he was permitted to take the piece from point one and place it on his own side. If the opponent had mistakenly touched the pile of pieces outside the board first he lost the game. The object was to fill up one's own table and then move the pieces around the board and home first.⁶⁷

⁶⁴Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 74.

⁶⁵In his Table of Contents, Lucas erroneously wrote; "Irish, a game on the cards." See Lucas, Lives of the Gamesters, p. 118.

⁶⁶Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 74.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 79.

NINE MEN'S MORRIS, MERELLES, NINEPENNY MORRIS, FIVE PENNY MORRIS. This game was the rage in Jacobean England and Shakespeare immortalized it in A Midsummer Night's

Dream:

The fold stands empty in the drowned field
 And the crows are fatted with the murrain
 Flock;
 The Nine Men's Morris is filled up with
 mud,
 And the quaint mazes on the wanton green⁶⁸
 For lack of tread are indistinguishable.

This game was noted for the variety of names it possessed. The term merelles was French and this usually indicated the indoor version of Nine Men's Morris.⁶⁹ The name of the game also varied by region, in Lincolnshire, it was called Meg Merrylegs; in Derbyshire, Nine Men's Marriage; in Cornwall, Morrice; in Oxfordshire, Ninepenny and so forth.

Cotgrave in his Dictionary (1611), described the game as a puerile pastime commonly played with stones.⁷⁰ Nine Men's Morris was also popular with the lesser folk in Stuart England.⁷¹

⁶⁸Shakespeare, Works, 1:351.

⁶⁹Hole, English Sports and Pastimes, p. 84 and p. 37.

⁷⁰Strutt, Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 256.

⁷¹Hole, English Sports and Pastimes, p. 4.

The game was played in the same manner indoors or outdoors. Two players each had nine stones or pegs of a different color. The objective was to remove the opponent's pegs from the board first. In the beginning of the game one had to get three pegs in a straight line, either vertical or horizontal; this line was termed a "mill". If the player succeeded in creating a mill he was allowed to remove an opponent's peg provided it was not a part of a mill. Pegs were placed on the board in turns one at a time. After all the pegs were placed on the board, the opponents were then permitted to move a peg one space at a time to any adjacent hole in the same straight line. Again, a successful mill resulted in the removal of one of the opponent's pegs. You were not allowed to break and reform a line of three with the same peg in successive moves. When one player was reduced to three men, he could then move to any vacant space on the board. The game ended when one participant had only two pegs left and could not form a mill.⁷²

THE PHILOSOPHER'S GAME. This was another favorite indoor pastime with the Jacobean courtiers and their

⁷²Taylor, Pub Games, pp. 212-214 and Strutt, Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 256.

ladies.⁷³ The board for playing this game was in the form of a parallelogram and grided so that it resembled two chess boards fastened together. Each participant had twenty-four counters of a different color with numbers on them. One of the counters was called the Pyramis (King). The rules of the game remain unclear but the purpose was to take the opponent's Pyramis.⁷⁴

SICE-ACE. This board game used the backgammon board but instead of two players, five played with six men each. They placed their men on the Aces, and moved their men out with a roll of six. Doubles also counted fourfold. To win one had to be the first to get his men back home. It was generally agreed that the last one to move off his base was the loser.⁷⁵

SHOVE-GROAT, SLYP-GROAT, SLIDE-THRIFT, SHOVE-HA'PENNY. This game appears to have been originally played with the silver groat which later gave way to the broad shilling of Edward VI. Each player placed his coin upon the edge of the table and then struck it with the palm of his hand into one of the nine partitions on the parallelogram-shaped board. One's score depended upon which partition

⁷³Burke, English Night-Life from Norman Curfew to Present Black-out, p. 16.

⁷⁴Lilly Stone, English Sports and Recreations, p. 24 and Strutt, Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, pp. 254-255.

⁷⁵Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 78.

the coin landed in. If the coin rested on the boundaries which separated the sections or outside of the dimensions of the board they were not counted.⁷⁶ The player had five coins at a turn. The first player to score three times in each section was the winner.⁷⁷

SHOVEL-BOARD. In the seventeenth century no residence of a nobleman was complete unless he had a shovel-board table. This fashionable piece of furniture was usually stationed in the great hall. The expense of the table dictated that this game was largely confined to the wealthy upper-class in Stuart England.⁷⁸

The tables for Shovel-board varied in size but the average dimensions were three feet wide by thirty feet long. The players, ordinarily two, stood at one end. At the opposite end a line was drawn parallel to the edge and three or four inches from it, and another line was drawn about four feet from the first line. Each player had four flat metal weights, which they alternately shoved down the table. The goal was to place the weight beyond the first mark and as close to the second mark

⁷⁶ Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 242.

⁷⁷ Bell, Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations, 1:123-124.

⁷⁸ Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 238.

as possible.⁷⁹

If the weight fell off the end of the table it was not counted; if it rested on the edge without falling off the player scored three points; if the weight lay between the line and edge without hanging over, it was worth two points; finally, if the player's weight cleared the first line but not the second, he earned one point. When there were two players, the first player to obtain eleven points won. If more than two players engaged in the game the winning score was raised.⁸⁰

TICK-TACK, TRICK TRACK. This was another table game which used a backgammon board. In Tack-Tack all the men were placed on the Ace-point where only two men were placed in the Backgammon. In this game the player was penalized if he did not seize his opponent's men when the opportunity arose. Once again, the winner of the game was the player who had all his men home first.⁸¹

The Compleat Gamester mentions three particular strategies of Tick-Tack. Toots occurred when one filled up their table close to home and then needed "small throws"

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 238-239.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 76-77.

to move their men home. Boveries resulted when one had a man on the eleventh point on both sides of the tables. Flyers ensued by bringing a man around the tables before your adversary had traversed his own side, ". . . to the effecting of which there is required very high throwing of your side, and very low throwing of his."⁸²

Monsieur St. Evremont was a Stuart gamester whose expertise centered upon the game of Grand Tick-Tack.

Lucas recorded:

Thus one time playing with the King of France at Grand Tricktrack, he won from him above 4000 pistoles in one night; and it being afterwards declared to his most Christian Majesty, that Monsieur St. Evremont, had put false dice upon him, the King so resented the matter, that he intended to punish him severely; but having notice of it fled into Holland"83

St. Evremont was later invited to England by Charles II where he also enjoyed the patronage of James II and William III.⁸⁴

TROLL-MY-DAME, TROUL-IN-MADAME. This game was borrowed from the French. The game consisted of rolling small balls into holes at one end of a game board. The

⁸²Ibid., p. 77.

⁸³Lucas, Lives of the Gamesters, p. 245.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 246.

Tudor doctor John Jones recommended the game to female patients:

The Ladyes, Gentle Women, Wyves and Maydes maye in one of the Galleries walke: and if the weather bee not agreeable too theire expectacion, they may have in the ende of a Benche eleven holes made, intoo the which to trowle premmetes, or owles, of leade, bigge, little, or meane, or also of Copper, Tynne, Woode, eyther vyolent or softe, after their owne discretion, the pastyme Troule in Madame is termed.⁸⁵

Numerical values were assigned to the holes and the score was tabulated by figuring the number of marbles in each hold. This game was a precursor of Nine-holes, a bowling game played on the floor or ground.⁸⁶ Shakespeare also mentioned the game in Winter's Tale.⁸⁷

Bowling Games

The ball is one of the most universally known aids for playing and gaming.⁸⁸ Sports which used the ball in Stuart England included a variety of bowling games. Bowls, as they were termed, had origins in ancient times

⁸⁵ Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 223.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Shakespeare, Works, 3:227.

⁸⁸ Lieberman, Playfulness: Its Relationship to Imagination and Creativity, p. 8.

and the balls used then were made of stone, bronze, iron or wood.⁸⁹ Manuscripts from the thirteenth century reveal that bowling was also a popular pastime in the middle ages.⁹⁰

Bowling was also a common game among the nobility of the seventeenth century. Both the government's attempts to control Bowls and the numerous references to the game in the literature of the period attest to the frequency of this pastime.

Legal control of bowling began in the Tudor era. In 1511, Henry VIII forbade Bowls in favor of archery which was on the decline.⁹¹ A stricter statute was issued in 1541, when laborers, artisans, apprentices, and servants were prohibited from playing at bowls except during the twelve days of Christmas when they were allowed to bowl in their master's house. Under the same statute no person was allowed to bowl in open places outside of their own gardens or orchards, under a penalty 6s. 8d. Only noblemen and those who owned land worth £100 or more, were able to secure a license to keep a

⁸⁹Taylor, Pub Games, p. 165.

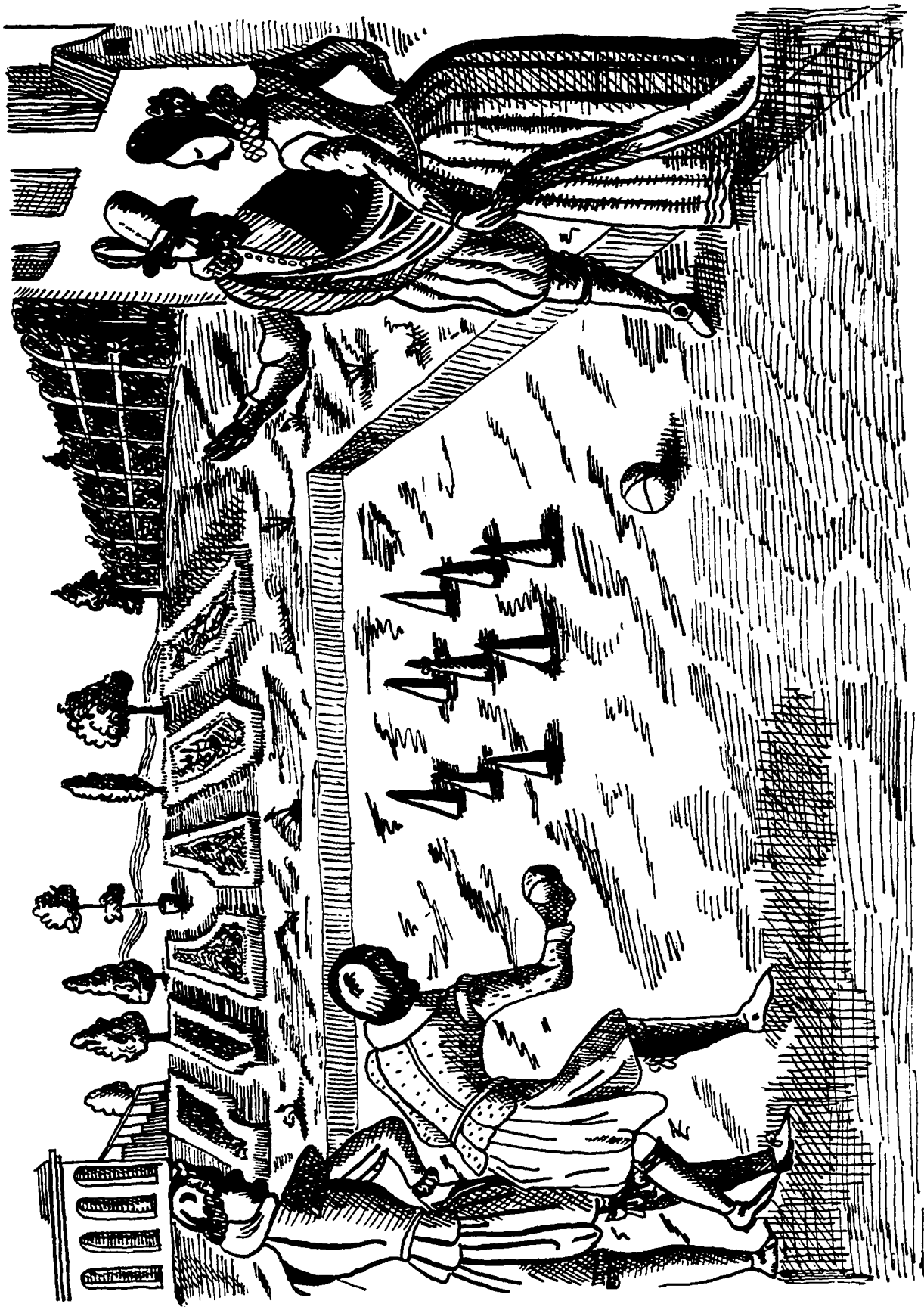
⁹⁰Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 216.

⁹¹Hole, English Sports and Pastimes, pp. 44-45.

Plate V.*

PLAYING BOWLS

*Lilly Stone, English Sports and Recreations, n. p.



bowling green or alley on their estate.⁹² This legislation was not appealed until 1845.⁹³

The crown's regulation of gaming served a dual purpose of generating revenue through patents and fines, and insuring the symbolic justification of rank and status for the nobility.⁹⁴ In the changing society of Stuart England, traditional privileges made it easier for aristocrats to convey the impression that a continuous succession of nobility had always persisted.⁹⁵ Thus, Bowls was a game which could be played not only for pleasure but also for social recognition.

In 1618, when James I issued the Book of Sports, he confirmed the prohibition of Bowls for the lower class. (See Appendix I). In the long double-storied edifice which housed the indoor bowling alleys at Whitehall, the courtiers played on the second floor and the lesser officers and servants of the court bowled on the ground

⁹² Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 216.

⁹³ Hole, English Sports and Pastimes, pp. 44-45.

⁹⁴ Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641, p. 583.

⁹⁵ Laslett, The World We Have Lost: England Before the Industrial Age, p. 9.

floor.⁹⁶ James I also extended the licensing of bowling alleys as a monopoly to the Duke of Buckingham. Granting patents on the licensing of gaming apparatus was an easy means of paying a debt due from the crown to a subject. By 1617, thirty-one bowling alleys had been licensed in London inns, alehouses and gaming-houses.⁹⁷

Bowls was the favorite game of Charles I, and it was the most fashionable game in London where the resort of many noble bowlers was Piccadilly Hall.⁹⁸ Charles was often tempted to close the bowling alleys in the palace because of the constant quarrels among the courtiers there, but Queen Henrietta Maria, intervened and the alleys stayed open.⁹⁹ During his captivity at Holdenby Palace, where the green was in poor condition, Charles was allowed to ride over to Lord Vaux's at Harrowden or Earl Spencer's at Athorp, where there were good bowling-greens.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Akrigg, Jacobean Pageant or the Court of King James I, p. 280.

⁹⁷ Saunders, The Age of Candlelight: The English Social Scene in the Seventeenth Century, p. 172.

⁹⁸ Jesse, Memoirs of the Court of England During the Reign of the Stuarts, Including the Protectorate, 2:103 and p. 248.

⁹⁹ Elizabeth Hamilton, Henrietta Maria (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc., 1976), p. 126.

¹⁰⁰ Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 219.

Many Puritans were indecisive about their reaction to bowling. Most objected to the betting, drinking and swearing which occurred at games of Bowls. Conservative Puritans agreed with Quarles that bowling was a sin. Quarles recorded his views in a poem titled "Emblems," which was written in the early 1600's.

Come, reader, come; I'll light thine
 eyes the way
 To view the prize, the while the
 gamesters play . . .
 That gives the ground to Satan: and
 the bowls
 Are sinful thoughts; the prize, a
 crown for fools.
 Who breathes that bowls not? What
 bold tongue can say
 Without a blush, he has not bow'd
 to-day?
 It is the trade of man, and ev'ry
 sinner
 Has play'd his rubbers: every soul's
 a winner,
 The vulgar proverb's crost, he hardly
 can
 Be a good bowler and an honest man.¹⁰¹

Other Puritans approved of the game. James I's Puritan courtier Lord Herbert wrote, ". . . I can allow a little bowling; so that the company be choice and good."¹⁰² The Puritans did succeed in prohibiting Bowls

¹⁰¹Shakespeare, Works, 3:321, illustrative comment 1.

¹⁰²The Autobiography of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, ed. Sidney Lee, 2nd ed. (1906; reprint ed., Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1970), p. 42.

on Sunday but a bill to forbid bowling altogether was rejected by the Commonwealth Parliament of 1657, because the Lord Protector himself enjoyed the game.¹⁰³ Despite the legal restrictions on bowling, the sport remained popular in the back street alleys and greens "out of the eye of government."¹⁰⁴

With the Restoration, Bowls became even more popular and a number of alleys were built throughout England.¹⁰⁵ A bowling green was considered an essential when a nobleman was constructing or purchasing a rural estate. The aristocracy wanted to advertise their wealth with the purchase of obtrusively expensive capital goods, equipment and services like bowling alleys or greens.¹⁰⁶ In describing one nobleman's home Evelyn wrote, "There is to this a very fine bowling-greene; meadow, pasture, wood, in a word all that can render a country seate delightful."¹⁰⁷ The nobility tended their private alleys and

¹⁰³Bridenbaugh, Vexed and Troubled Englishmen: 1590-1642, p. 155 and Thomas Burton, Diary, p. 229.

¹⁰⁴Bridenbaugh, Vexed and Troubled Englishmen, p. 197.

¹⁰⁵Wymer, Sport in England: A History of Two Thousand Years of Games and Pastimes, p. 98.

¹⁰⁶Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641, p. 185.

¹⁰⁷Evelyn, Diary, 4:482, September 22, 1685.

greens with loving care, and measures were taken to protect them. Celia Fiennes' uncle, Sir Griffith Boynton, had his ". . . Bowling green palisado'd round in the middle."¹⁰⁸

Charles II was so fond of bowling that he even personally sanctioned a book titled, *Rules for the Game of Bowls as Settled by His Most Excellent Majesty Charles II in the Year 1670*.¹⁰⁹ All the new spas build during the reign of Charles II included greens or alleys for the members of the nobility and gentry who desired to engage in a sport sanctioned by their majesty.¹¹⁰

Gramont, at the Restoration court, was surprised that Bowls was a game of the nobility. Gramont noted:

The game of bowls, which in France is the pastime of mechanics and servants only, is quite the contrary in England, where it is the exercise of gentleman, and requires both art and address.¹¹¹

According to Pepys, women were also bowlers in the Stuart era. If they were not participants, they were always ready to countenance the sport with their presence as

¹⁰⁸Fiennes, Journeys, pp. 89-90.

¹⁰⁹Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, p. 212.

¹¹⁰Hole, English Sports and Pastimes, pp. 45-46.

¹¹¹Anthony Hamilton, Memoirs of Count Grammont, p. 364.

spectators.¹¹²

The literature of the seventeenth century mentions or alludes to Bowls frequently. Many of the terms of bowling were used by Shakespeare and other writers; a "rub" was anything that diverted the ball from its course; a "jack" or "mistress", was a small bowl placed as mark at which to aim; and a "kiss" occurred when one bowl touched another.¹¹³

Some authors of the period offered advice on how to bowl. Gervase Markham in Country Contentments, (1615) wrote that Bowls was a game:

in which a man shall find great art in choosing out his ground, and preventing the winding, hanging, and many turning advantages of the same, whether it be in open wilde places, or in close allies; and for his sport, the chusing of the bowle is the greatest cunning; your flat bowles being best for allies, your round-byazed bowles for open grounds of advantage, and your round bowles like a ball, for green swarthes that are plain and level.¹¹⁴

Cotton repeated Markham's advice in his book, The Compleat

¹¹²Pepys, Diary, 2:92, "Here very merry and played, us and our wifes at bowles." and 3:146, ". . . White-hall garden, and the bowling alley (where the lords and ladies are now at bowles) in brave condition."

¹¹³Lilly Stone, English Sports and Recreations, p. 5 and Shakespeare, Works, 3:321, see illustrative comment 1. The line in Hamlet's famous speech which reads, "Ay, there's the rub," is one example of a literary illusion to bowling.

¹¹⁴Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, pp. 218-219.

Gamester.

Other Stuart writers ridiculed the mannerisms which some courtiers used when engaged in the game. The following passage from "Emblems" again illustrates the point.

See how their curved bodies wreath
 and screw
 Such antic shapes as Proteus-never
 knew:
 One raps an oath, another deals a
 curse:
 He never better bowl'd; this never
 worse:
 One rubs his itchless elbow, shrugs
 and laughs,
 The other bends his beetle brows and
 chafes:
 Sometimes they whoop, sometimes their
 stygian cries
 They make bad premises, and worse con-
 clusion.¹¹⁵

Seventeenth century critics of Bowls also focused on the attraction of bowling for both honest and dishonest gamesters. The astrologer William Lilly wrote in his Autobiography that he sometimes played Bowls ". . . at six in the Morning, and so continued till three or four in the Afternoon, many times without Bread or Drink all that while."¹¹⁶ John Earle did not share Lilly's obsession with the game and in Microcosmographie, he stated that a bowling alley:

¹¹⁵Shakespeare, Works, 3:321, illustrative comment 1.

¹¹⁶Lilly, Autobiography, p. 17.

Is the place where there are three things thrown away besides bowls, to wit, time, money, and curses, and the last ten for one. The best sport in it is the gamesters, and he enjoys it that looks on and bets not. It is the school of wrangling, and worse than the schools, for men will cavil here for a hair's breadth, and make a stir where a straw would end the controversy.¹¹⁷

Betting was common at bowling matches and spectators were also at liberty to place their bets.¹¹⁸ Evelyn recorded winning ten pounds at a game of Bowls.¹¹⁹ Many of the profiligates at the bowling greens followed the advice of the Marquis of Somerset, who suggested that a lead pellet be inserted into the bowl to give it a slight advantageous curve.¹²⁰ This technique increased the gamester's chances of winning his bet. Some of the rooks who engaged in these cheating methods were able to make ". . . so small a spot of ground yield them more annually then fifty acres of land shall do elsewhere" ¹²¹

¹¹⁷ John Earle, Microcosmographie, p. 45. Cotton repeated this passage in The Compleat Gamester.

¹¹⁸ Anthony Hamilton, Memoirs of Count Grammont, p. 364.

¹¹⁹ Evelyn, Diary, 3:219, August 14, 1658.

¹²⁰ Elizabeth Burton, The Jacobeans at Home, p. 292.

¹²¹ Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 22.

By the reign of Queen Anne, Bowls was regarded as a sport which lacked decorum and was more suitable for the commoner sort of people.¹²² This estimation of the worthlessness of Bowls seemed to have applied to all its variations. A few of the more popular Bowls games in the seventeenth century were:

BOWLS. In the early form of this game, two players, each with a ball, stood a certain distance apart. After they had placed cones on the ground by their feet, they took turns rolling their ball along the ground in an attempt to knock over the opponent's cone. By the seventeenth century, the cones were replaced by a single ball, the "jack" or "mistress," the players would then take turns aiming at the ball to see who could come closest.¹²³

CLOSH, CLOISH. In Closh, the pins were set up in rows and a bowl was used to knock them down. The bowls were usually composed of brazil wood.¹²⁴

HALF-BOWL, ROLY-POLY. Half-bowls was a bowling game played with one half of a sphere of wood. The game was usually played on the floor of a room that was smooth

¹²²Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, pp. 212-213.

¹²³Brewster, "Games and Sports in Shakespeare," p. 31.

¹²⁴Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, pp. 219-220.

and level. Twelve small conical-shaped pins were placed in a circle about two and one half feet in diameter. Another pin was placed in the center of the circle and two other pins were placed behind the circle thus forming a row of five pins, including two of those upon the circumference. The players used the bowl to cast at the pins. In the first toss, the bowl had to pass above the pins and around the last pin before one could start to score. The pin in the middle was worth four points; the third pin in the row of five counted three; the fourth pin in the row counted two, and the pins in the circle counted a point each. The first player to score thirty-one won the game.¹²⁵

KAYLES, CAYLES, KEILES. This game was a French invention. It was played with pins though not confined to any number. One pin known as the king-pin was always larger than the rest of the pins which were placed in a single row and then knocked down with a cudgel.¹²⁶

LOGGATS. Loggats was exactly like Kayles except bones were substituted for the wooden pins and another bone was thrown at them to knock them down.¹²⁷ Shakespeare

¹²⁵ Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, pp. 221-222.

¹²⁶ Ibid., pp. 219-220.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 220.

refers to this game in Hamlet, "Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with them?"¹²⁸ Throughout the Stuart age this game was associated with the lower class.¹²⁹

NINE-HOLES. In this game nine holes were carved in a square board in three rows of three, all of them at equal distances. Every hole had a numeral value from one to nine. The board was fixed horizontally on a green and surrounded on three sides with a gentle acclivity. Each player had a certain number of small metal balls which were bowled at the board one at a time from a fixed distance of five or six feet. The score was reckoned by the value of the holes into which his balls rested. The player with the highest score won.¹³⁰

NINE-PINS, SKITTLES. This was the bowling game usually found in indoor alleys in Stuart England.¹³¹ In this game the pins, made of either wood or bone, were set at the end of an alley in rows of three. The winner was the player who had bowled down all the pins with

¹²⁸Shakespeare, Works, 3:387, Hamlet, Act V Scene i.

¹²⁹Lilly Stone, English Sports and Recreations, pp. 5-6.

¹³⁰Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, pp. 220-221.

¹³¹Mitchell and Leys, A History of the English People, p. 390.

the fewest throws.¹³² This was one of Samuel Pepys' favorite games, and one he was willing to bet at either for drinks or money.¹³³

Tennis

Tennis developed from the French game of Jeu de paume (palm play), in which a glove was used in place of a racket. By the seventeenth-century the oblong racket with strings had developed and the game was usually played on indoor tennis courts. The expense of both the court and the gaming equipment dictated that Tennis was an aristocratic sport. The royal courts were supplemented by public courts operated by proprietors of gaming-houses and a few private courts.¹³⁴

In Jacobean England the rules for Tennis were not standardized and the size of the court varied.¹³⁵ In 1615, there were fourteen tennis courts in London; the largest was at the Essex house (84' x 22') and the smallest was

¹³² Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, pp. 220-221.

¹³³ Pepys, Diary, June 24, 1663, 4:197 and April 28, 1660, 1:118.

¹³⁴ Lilly Stone, English Sports and Recreations, pp. 20-21.

¹³⁵ Brewster, "Games and Sports in Shakespeare," pp. 45-46.

at Powles house (55' x 16').¹³⁶ Even if the sides varied they possessed the same features. The outer and inner walls were covered with a sloping roof called the penthouse. There was a large opening at the end of the service side of the court and a smaller opening in the eastern corner of the other side. Lines were marked on the courts to determine a "chase". Galleries were erected along the side so observers could watch the noble players.¹³⁷ The net of the tennis court was a rope or cord loosely strung across the center. A fringe of tassels hung from it to prevent the ball from passing underneath. The balls used in the game were white leather stuffed with feathers, wool or hair.¹³⁸ The leather balls of the Stuart era were stronger and more resilient than the balls of the previous era, which were made of cloth.¹³⁹

The object was to use the racket to hit the ball back and forth across the net, sometimes with the aid of the walls. One scored a point when his opponent missed the ball. A "chase" occurred when one player

¹³⁶Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 87.

¹³⁷Lilly Stone, English Sports and Recreations, pp. 20-21.

¹³⁸Saunders, The Age of Candlelight: The English Social Scene in the Seventeenth Century, p. 171.

¹³⁹Lilly Stone, English Sports and Recreations, p. 21.

elected not to hit the ball, but to let it drop. The spot where the ball fell was marked and players changed sides; thus giving the opponent an opportunity to make a better "chase," that is, a chance to drive the ball beyond the first mark. A player also scored a point if his opponent's ball struck the roof or grille.¹⁴⁰

James I did not play Tennis, but he recommended it for his sons Henry and Charles.¹⁴¹ Charles was coached by John Webb who had to supply the tennis balls and rackets out of his salary of L20 per annum.¹⁴²

The Puritans also approved of Tennis. Northbrooke labeled Tennis a "good exercise."¹⁴³ The tennis courts at Lisle's and Gibbon's gaming-houses were kept open during the Protectorate.¹⁴⁴

The Puritan endorsement of Tennis was surprising in view of the fact that large sums were often staked on Tennis matches. In February 1612, Chamberlain recorded:

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 20-21.

¹⁴¹ Elizabeth Burton, The Jacobeans at Home, p. 298.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 299.

¹⁴³ Northbrooke, A Treatise, p. 79.

¹⁴⁴ Fraser, Cromwell: The Lord Protector, pp. 475-476.

A son of the Bishop of Bristol, his eldest, of 19 or 20 years old, killed himself with a knife to avoid the disgrace of breeching, which his mother or mother-in-law (I know not whether) would needs have put him to for losing his money at tennis.¹⁴⁵

Prince Charles lost the Denmark House to the Duke of Buckingham in a Tennis match.¹⁴⁶ Betting at Tennis continued during the Commonwealth and Dorothy Osborne often scolded William Temple for losing too much money at Tennis. She even threatened:

Soe I, with a great deale more reason do declare that I will noe longer bee a freind [sic] to one that's none to himself nor aprehend the losse of what you hazard every day at Tennis.¹⁴⁷

Charles II was an immensely enthusiastic tennis player who also liked to stake large wagers on his Tennis games.¹⁴⁸ He played in a taffeta Tennis suit with tennis shoes, which were soft slippers with woolen soles. Charles even kept a bed at this new court at Whitehall because he often played at six o'clock in the morning. In Pepy's

¹⁴⁵ Chamberlain, Letters, p. 124.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 272.

¹⁴⁷ The Letters of Dorothy Osborne to William Temple, ed. G. C. Moore Smith (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1928), p. 13.

¹⁴⁸ Elizabeth Burton, The Jacobeans at Home, p. 298.

opinion Charles II was a tolerable player. He wrote:

Thence to the Tennice Court. . . and there saw the King play at Tennis and others. But to see how the King's play was extolled without any cause at all, was a loathsome sight, though sometimes indeed he did play very well and deserved to be commended; but such open flattery is beastly.¹⁴⁹

Pepys believed that Prince Rupert was one of the best Tennis players in Restoration England.¹⁵⁰

Many Stuart aristocrats engaged in Tennis for its salubrious qualities. Charles II would weigh himself before and after a game to determine how much weight he had lost. On one occasion he lost four and half pounds.¹⁵¹

Thomas Hobbes also gave credence to the healthfulness of a game of Tennis. Aubrey recorded:

Besides his dayly Walking, he did twice or thrice a yeare play at Tennis (at about 75 he did it) then went to bed there and was well rubbed. This he did believe would make him live two or three yeares the longer.¹⁵²

Yet not everyone in Stuart England believed playing Tennis

¹⁴⁹Pepys, Diary, 4:4, January 4, 1664.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 8:418-419, September 2, 1667.

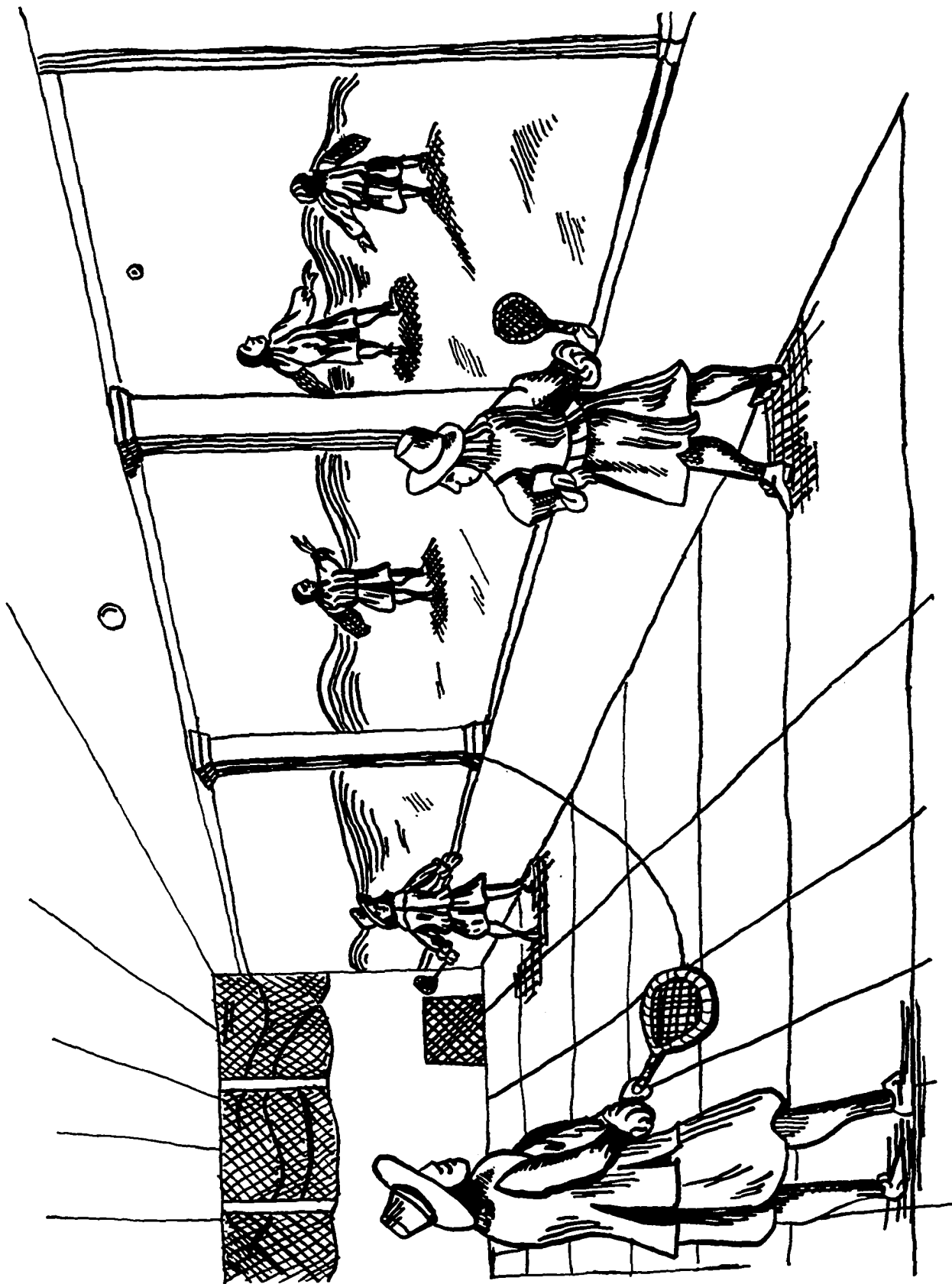
¹⁵¹Ibid.

¹⁵²Aubrey, Brief Lives, p. 155.

Plate VI.*

AT THE TENNIS COURT

*Wymer, Sport in England, p. 224.



was beneficial, and Dorothy Osborne cautioned Temple, ". . . not to take colde when you are at ye Tennis Court."¹⁵³ William III always had a bottle of claret sent to the Tennis court when he played.¹⁵⁴

FIVES. This game was one of the two versions of Tennis which were played indoors by members of the Stuart nobility. Fives resembled handball and it was probably one of the oldest forms of a ball game. It was played against a wall or church tower and the specifics of the rules have not survived.¹⁵⁵

SHUTTLE-COCK, SHITTLE-COCK. Shuttle-Cock was a fashionable pastime in Jacobean England. In this game the participants stood on either side of a net which was placed at shoulder level. The players hit the feathered ball back and forth with a racket.¹⁵⁶ Shuttle-Cock was probably played throughout the Stuart era since Pepys recorded engaging in the game in January, 1660.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³Osborne, Letters, p. 93, September 22, 1653.

¹⁵⁴Elizabeth Hamilton, William's Mary: A Biography of Mary II, p. 219.

¹⁵⁵Lilly Stone, English Sports and Recreations, p. 6.

¹⁵⁶Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, pp. 243-244.

¹⁵⁷Pepys, Diary, 1:15, January 11, 1660.

Traditional Games

There were a number of simple indoor games and entertainments played by Stuart aristocrats. A few of the more popular games follow.

ACROSTICS. In the seventeenth century intellectual noblemen and women would take a composition, usually a verse, and form names and titles from certain letters of the lines. The game became more popular after the Restoration.¹⁵⁸

ANAGRAMS. Jacobean gentlemen would make Anagrams of ladies' names. Words or phrases were made by reforming the letters in the name.¹⁵⁹ In the Restoration candid pen portraits and characterizations of one's friends accompanied the Anagrams.¹⁶⁰

CAP-VERSES, PROVERS-CAPPING. The object in this game was to outlast an opponent in quoting proverbs having some bearing on the topic which was first elicited.¹⁶¹ Shakespeare provides an example of this game in

¹⁵⁸ Elixabeth Burton, The Jacobeans at Home, p. 304.

¹⁵⁹ Camden, The Elizabethan Woman, p. 161.

¹⁶⁰ Elizabeth Burton, The Jacobeans at Home, p. 304.

¹⁶¹ Brewster, "Games and Sports in Shakespeare," p. 41.

Henry V.

Ill-will never said well.
 I will cap that proverb with - There
is flattery in friendship.
 Usually There is falsehood in
 friendship.
 And I will take up that with- Give the
devil his due.¹⁶²

CRAMBO. Crambo was played with one player giving a word and the others matching the word with a rhyme.¹⁶³
 Pepys played Crambo with friends while journeying in a wagon.¹⁶⁴

FLAP-DRAGONS, SNAPDRAGON. This game was usually played during the Christmas season. In this sport a plum or a raisin was placed in a shallow dish of brandy which then lighted. The participants had to "snap" the fruit from the burning Brandy with their mouths and then eat it as quickly as they could.¹⁶⁵

QUESTIONS AND COMMANDS, PURPOSES. This game was described by Pepys in his diary.

¹⁶²Shakespeare, Works, 2:91, Act III, Scene vii.

¹⁶³Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 311.

¹⁶⁴Pepys, Diary, 1:149, May 19, 1660.

¹⁶⁵Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, pp. 310-311.

And after dinner the Comptroller began some sports; amoney others, the Nameing of people round, and afterward demanding Questions of them that they are forced, to answer their names to; which doth make a very good sport.¹⁶⁶

RIDDLES. Posing riddles was a common game for all ages under the early Stuarts.¹⁶⁷ After the Restoration the game of posing riddles was augmented by riddle contests and wit-combants.¹⁶⁸

'WHAT IS IT LIKE?', SIMILITUDES. Swift in his Journal to Stella, disclaimed the invention of this game. "To day's Examiner talks of the Play of What is it like? and you will think it to be mine, and be bit, for I have no hand in those Papers at all."¹⁶⁹ The Examiner, 5-9 January 1712/1713, provided an account of the game. One person throught of a subject and the other players tried to guess it by naming similitudes.¹⁷⁰

The popularity of competitive games in Stuart England can be attributed to a number of factors. Aside from

¹⁶⁶ Pepys, Diary, 2:30, February 4, 1661.

¹⁶⁷ Camden, The Elizabethan Women, p. 162

¹⁶⁸ Brewster, "Games and Sports in Shakespeare," p. 41.

¹⁶⁹ Jonathan Swift: Journal to Stella, ed. Harold Williams, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), 2:590.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

an element of fun, gaming in seventeenth century England could be a profitable activity if one was skilled or lucky enough to win one's bet. Note how the Duke of Buckingham gained the Denmark House when he defeated Charles in a tennis match. The acceptability of cheating at these competitive games reflects not only the morals of the society but also the rivalry which existed in the society as a whole.

This antagonism is also manifested in the willingness of the landed classes to enact restrictive legislation which prohibited the lesser members of Stuart society from engaging in their recreations. The aristocratic demands for an elevation of status are exhibited in the statutes which limit Bowls to the upper classes. The nobles and aristocrats also knew that a public display of their luxury goods, such as Billiard tables and bowling greens, reinforced their elitism not only in the monetary realm but also in the continuation of tradition.

After the Restoration, the decline of the more complex and physically demanding competitive games such as Chess, Billiards and Bowls is evidenced. Why this was true is an intriguing question. One can only speculate that the games which required prolong play and a high measure of expertise were not as amendable to the gambling inclinations of the late seventeenth century gamblers, an increasing number of whom were women. Physically

demanding competitive games like Tennis or Bowls were usually not played by women, and with the decline of the traditional militaristic function of the nobility the gentlemen of the Augustan age may not have been inclined to remain agile in anticipation of a war. Finally, the decline in these games may have been due to a declining interest in games no longer vogue as cards, dice and gambling games like Roulette increased in popularity.

'...sure there cannot be anything more disagreeable than to have company to entertain that will neither speak nor play at cards, and that was my fate all afternoon.'

- Queen Anne*

CHAPTER VI

ADULT GAMES IN STUART ENGLAND: CARDS, DICING AND GAMBLING GAMES

Games of chance have always been popular, in part because they are based on decisions that are independent of the player. The participant's own will is negated and he surrenders blindly to chance.¹ In Stuart England, the most popular games of chance took a form of gambling either with dice, cards or the roulette wheel and lotteries.

In games of chance all must play with exactly the same possibility of proving their superiority. Everyone has an equal chance of winning; dice for example does not have the function of causing the more intelligent to win. The role of the dice tends to abolish natural or acquired individual differences. All are placed on absolutely

* Green, Queen Anne, p. 35.

¹ Caillois, Man, Play, and Games, pp. 58-59

equal footing to await their fate.² The equalizing influence of gambling at games of chance may have accounted for their vast popularity in Stuart England.

Card Games

Playing at cards was probably the most popular pastime for the nobility and aristocracy in seventeenth-century England. Playing cards have been in use since ancient times. Modern cards first appeared in France in the fourteenth century, and they quickly spread to England.³ In 1463, by an act of Parliament, foreign cards were prohibited, presumably to protect domestic manufactures.⁴ Government regulations of cards continued throughout the seventeenth century as card-playing increased in popularity. (See Appendix II).

James I, in 1615, issued a duty of five shillings a pack on playing cards. Taxes on packs of cards continued throughout the Stuart era, and in 1710, as one means of raising money for the war, the rate was raised to sixpence a pack. Jonathan Swift in his Journal to Stella,

²Ibid., pp. 18-19.

³L. E. Maistrov, Probability Theory: A Historical Sketch, trans. and ed. Samuel Kotz (New York: Academic Press, 1974), p. 13.

⁴Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 260 and p. 239.

stated that this tax made cards ". . . very dear which spoils small gamesters."⁵

The popularity of card games in the seventeenth century may have been due in part to a promotion of card-playing by the crown. Promoting techniques to generate revenue may have included a conscious effort to exhibit card gaming at the court or in other aristocratic locales in an attempt to influence the lower classes to copy the trends of the court.

In 1623, the card-makers in London formed themselves into a "Worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards" which was incorporated by a charter.⁶ (See Appendix II). Seventeenth-century cards were printed from wood blocks and colored with stencils or filled in by hand.⁷ After the invention of copper engraving, the cards were produced by the graver, and they were sufficiently finished so that the impressions did not require hand-coloring.⁸ The cards

⁵Swift, Journal to Stella, 2:375.

⁶Hargrave, A History of Playing Cards and a Bibliography of Cards and Gaming, pp. 180-182.

⁷Hargrave, A History of Playing Cards and a Bibliography of Cards and Gaming, pp. 179-180 and Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, pp. 263-264.

⁸Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, pp. 263-264.

were made of stiff cardboard and they were cut very unevenly.⁹ The cards in Stuart England were also smaller and thinner than those of today.¹⁰

In the reign of Queen Anne, ordinary cards were cheap enough but specialized cards varied in price with:

. . . the best Principal superfine Picket Cards at 2s. 6d. a Dozen; the best Principal superfine Ombro Cards at 2s. 9d. a Dozen; the best Principal superfine Bassett Cards at 3s. 6d..¹¹

English card-makers could not match the quality and workmanship of their peers on the Continent and despite laws forbidding their import, French and Belgian cards were popular with English nobles.¹²

Some of the best artists of the period were employed for making cards. These included L. Hewson, the son of Cromwell's general, and Richard Blome.¹³ Not only card-playing, but the cards themselves were objects of interest for the inhabitants of Stuart England. In 1612, Samuel

⁹McDowell, "A Cursory View of Cheating at Whist in the Eighteenth Century," p. 167 and Hargrave, A History of Playing Cards and a Bibliography of Cards and Gaming, pp. 179-180.

¹⁰Ashton, Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne, p. 79.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 79-80.

¹²Hargrave, A History of Playing Cards and a Bibliography of Cards and Gaming, p. 180.

¹³Ibid., pp. 173-180.

Rowland expressed his view on the rendering of the Jacks on English cards.

"Knave of Hearts"

We are abused in a great degree;
 For, there's no knaves so wronged
 as are we
 By those that chiefly should be our
 part-takers:
 And thus it is my masters, you card-
 makers.
 All other knaves are at their own free
 will,
 To brave it out, and follow fashion
 still
 In any cut, according to the time:
 But we poor knaves (I know not for
 what crime)
 Are kept in piebald suits which we
 have worn
 Hundred of years; this hardly can be
 borne.
 The idle-headed French devised us
 first,
 Who of all fashion-mongers is the
 worst.¹⁴

Cards produced in the latter half of the seventeenth century were notable for their depiction of contemporary and historical events. Some of these engravings and descriptions were commentaries on the times. For example, one pack produced during the Commonwealth, had a political caricature on the Ace of Diamonds labeled "The High Court of Justice, or Oliver's Slaughter House."¹⁵ After the

¹⁴Lilly Stone, English Sports and Recreations, p. 22. Piebald suits dated from Chaucer's time.

¹⁵Mitchell and Leys, A History of the English People, p. 389.

Restoration, a series portraying scenes from the Spanish Armada was designed to protest the Duke of York's (later James II) leanings towards the Church of Rome.¹⁶ Conceivably, a gamester could make a hardly "subtle" political statement by using one of these decks of cards as he played. Under the later Stuarts, cards glorifying the reigns of James II, Queen Anne and Marlborough's victories were produced.¹⁷

After the stately decorum of the Elizabethan court, the intensity of the gaming at the court of James I shocked many Englishmen.¹⁸ Under Charles I, card-gambling and the bawdiness and ribaldry associated with it were reduced considerably, but the protests against card-playing continued.¹⁹ Many objected to both the gaming and the implements themselves. They agreed with Northbrooke that:

The plaie at Cardes in an invention
of the devill which he founde out that
he might the easilier bring in idolatrie

¹⁶Hargrave, A History of Playing Cards and a Bibliography of Cards and Gaming, p. 191.

¹⁷
Ibid., p. 197.

¹⁸Otto J. Scott, James I (New York: Mason/Charter, 1976), p. 286.

¹⁹Morra, Restoration England, p. 38.

amongst men; For the Kings and Coate cards that we use nowe, were in olde times the images of idols and false Gods, which since they that would seeme Christians have chaunged into Charlemaine, Lancelot, Hector and such like names because they would not seeme to imitate their idolatrie therein, and yet mainteine the plaie itself.²⁰

Northbrooke and other Puritans were particularly disturbed because some of the cards produced in Jacobean England represented Egyptian and Roman dieties such as Jupiter, Mercury, Ishtar, and Osiris. Sometimes the Cups, Wands, Swords and Rings of the Italian Tarot cards were reproduced on the face of the cards where the court cards were usually portrayed. The symbols on these packs often had hidden meanings which were known to those who used them for divination and fortune-telling.²¹

Card-playing was also taboo to many Puritans because it involved an element of chance, and these Puritans believed that God not man, was the sole arbitraitor of

²⁰Northbooke, A Treatise, p. 111. Court or face-cards were called coat cards because they depicted men and women in coats as opposed to cards which featured flowers or animals. See Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 264. On most modern cards, the Queen is Elizabeth of York and the King is Henry VIII. See Hole, English Sports and Pastimes, p. 85.

²¹Hole, English Sports and Pastimes, pp. 85-86.

chance. The arch-Puritan William Perkins also considered the worldly association of the Diety with sporting events sacrilegious. Perkins stated that the card-playing also aroused the emotions of fear and sorrow, distempered the mind, and provoked covetousness due to the money involved when gambling occurred.²²

The Restoration marked a rise in the popularity of card games after a decline during the Commonwealth. Charles II himself did not care much for card-playing or the gambling associated with it, and he rarely staked more than £5 on a card game.²³ Nevertheless, Charles was occasionally a victim of gambling fever, and it was remarked that he was ". . . glad to win a little money at play and impatient to lose but the thousandth part. . . ." ²⁴

The women of Charles II's court were intense gamblers who often played for large sums. The Countess of Castlemaine, one of Charles II's mistresses, was notorious for

²²Jable, "English Puritans - Suppressors of Sport and Amusement?", p. 35.

²³Arthur Irwin Dasent, Nell Gwynne 1650-1687: Her Life's Story from St. Giles to St. James's with Some Account of Whitehall and Windsor in the Reign of Charles the Second (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1924; reissued 1969), p. 177.

²⁴Douglas, English Historical Documents: 1660-1714, 8:899.

staking £1000 or £1500 at a time on the cards.²⁵ One Christmas, after the annual Twelfth Night revels, Charles paid Castlemaine's debt of £30,000 acquired at Basset.²⁶ In an effort to curb this gaming Charles II sent Monsieur Van der Does to Paris to buy little things for the female gamblers of the court to vie for instead of money.²⁷

Another Stuart monarch who loved card-playing was Queen Anne. She spend most of her afternoons at the card table.²⁸ Playing cards was so popular in this age that the card-table, with a hinged flap, green baize top, counters and candles, became an essential element in the furnishing of an aristocrat's home.²⁹

The gambling element associated with card-playing in Stuart England, produced a variety of cheating techniques. Profligates would spur or nick a card on the back so this could be felt when dealing.³⁰ Rooks also "slicked"

²⁵Jane Lane [E. K. Dakers], Puritan, Rake and Squire (London: Evans Brothers Ltd., 1950), pp. 81-82.

²⁶Jesse, Memoirs of the Court of England During the Reign of the Stuarts, Including the Protectorate, 5:213-214.

²⁷Charles II, Letters, Speeches and Declarations, p. 139. February 16, 1662, Charles II in a letter to his sister Henriette Marie in France.

²⁸Anne, Letters and Diplomatic Instructions, p. 28.

²⁹Turberville, Johnson's England: An Account of the Life and Manners of His Age, 2:142-143.

³⁰Northbrooke, A Treatise, p. 111.

cards by smoothing the normally rough-textured backs of the cards. Concealing cards, mis-dealing and sleight-of-hand tricks were the province of the more experienced swindler. Cotton also warned his readers against those gamesters who would use marked packs and:

. . . before they go to play will plant half a dozen of these packs (nay sometimes half a score) in the hands of a drawer, who to avoid being suspected will call to their confederate drawer for a fresh pack of cards, who brings them as from a shop new, and some of these packs shall be so finely markt, whereby the gamester shall plainly and certainly know every card therin contain'd. . . .³¹

Card-playing may have been popular in Stuart England because it was a game for which cheating implements could easily be devised. In the latter half of the Stuart era, when the professional gamester developed and the stakes were often higher, the calculation of the odds assumed even greater importance. Marked decks of cards coupled with dexterous dealing could sway the odds in the favor of the deft gamester.

Gambling with cards was also acceptable for female gamesters who may have been denied other gambling outlets such as private clubs, or games such as Billiards and

³¹Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 57-58.

Tennis which were usually the province of men. Finally, the suitability of card-playing for inclement weather and the fact that only one small piece of equipment (a deck of cards) was used may also be factors in the continuous popularity of card-playing in the reign of the Stuarts.

There were many different card games popular in Stuart England. Over half of Cotton's book, The Compleat Gamester was devoted to card games. Card games played by the nobility and gentry of Stuart England are listed below.

ALL-FOURS, ONE-AND-THIRTY. This "trivial and inconsiderable" game was very popular in Kent in the seventeenth century. Two players were dealt six cards apiece, the dealer being the one who had cut the highest card. The player who was not the dealer had the right to obtain three more cards and a different trump suit. This player also led the first trick and the second player had to follow suit if he could.³²

In points an Ace was four, a King was three, a Queen was two, a Knave was one and the Ten was worth face value. The object of the game was not to win tricks, but to get home certain counting cards, and to catch the Jack of

³²Ibid., pp. 53-55.

Trumps if it was in play.³³ Players were cautioned to watch for crafty gamesters who would take two Tens from a pack and hide them for later advantageous use.³⁴

Shirley in his play, Love's Cruelty, used allusions from All-Fours when one character was explaining to the others that it was better not to marry than to marry in haste. "Tis better to hazard being thrown out, by calling for more cards, than to stand on a weak hand."³⁵

THE ART OF MEMORY. This pastime was usually played for stakes, and it was regarded by rooks as ". . . the way to play the drunkard."³⁶ The cards were thrown on the table face up; after the players had attempted to memorize them, they were dealt to each participant. Each player then called for a particular card which was laid face down on the table. The first to call for a card which had already been laid down had to either drink a glass of ale, or pay a specified amount of money.³⁷

³³Hoyle, Hoyle's Complete and Authoritative Book of Games, pp. 3-5 and Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 53-55.

³⁴Cotton, The Complete Gamester, p. 54.

³⁵The Dramatic Works and Poems of Shirley, ed. Rev. Alexander Dyce 6 vols. (London: John Murray, 1833), 2:198.

³⁶Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 67.

³⁷Ibid.

BANKAFALET. In this game the cards were dealt equally to each real or imaginary player, and each participant laid down money on his own pile or on one of the supernumerary piles. If the dealer's card was inferior to the cards as they were turned up he paid the players; if the dealer's card was superior, he was paid by the others. The order of the suits was Diamonds, Hearts, Clubs, Spades, with cheaters naturally trying to secure the Ace of Diamonds.³⁸

BASSET. Basset was introduced in England around 1645, and it quickly became the rage.³⁹ This was the favorite game of several Queens of England, including Catherine of Braganza, Mary II and Mary of Modena, who was once ". . . exceedingly concern'd for the losse of 80 pounds."⁴⁰ In a later edition of The Compleat Gamester, Cotton wrote:

This game, amongst all those on the cards, is accounted to be the most courtly, being properly, by the understanders of it, thought only fit for Kings and Queens, great Princes, Noblemen, &c. to play at, by reason of such

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 72-73.

³⁹ Elizabeth Burton, The Jacobeans at Home, p. 290.

⁴⁰ Jesse, Memoirs of the Court of England During the Reign of the Stuarts, Including the Protectorate, 4:350; Elizabeth Hamilton, William's Mary: A Biography of Mary II, p. 263 and Evelyn, Diary, 4:519, July 13, 1686.

great losses, or advantages, as may possibly be on one side or other, during the time of play.⁴¹

This game was imported from France and retained many of the French terms. In Basset, the banker or Talliere had a great advantage as he was assured of winning on the first and last cards of the deck. The banker dealt thirteen cards to any number of players or Punters, who were allowed to place bets of any amount on any number of cards. The banker then turned up the first card which was a winner as the second card was a loser. For example, if the first card was a King and the second was a ten, the banker then paid on the winning King and collected any money laid on the losing ten. The banker continued calling each card winner or loser alternately until he finished the deck.⁴²

BEAST, LA BETT. In Beast, the best cards were King, Queen and so forth. Three piles were dealt out; they were called the King, the Play and the Triolet. The gamesters placed bets on these heaps. Any number could play and each was dealt five cards. After playing tricks, the participant who had the most points won the money off

⁴¹Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 271.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 271-277.

the Play, he who held the trump King won the money from that pile, and the player with three of a kind won the money on the Triolet.⁴³

BONE-ACE. Bone-Ace was a "trivial and very inconsiderable" game, yet it was played by "ladies and persons of quality."⁴⁴ The game was popular throughout the Stuart era.⁴⁵

In Bone-Ace, the dealer dealt two cards face down and one face up to any number of players. Three-of-a-kind won unless another player had the Ace of Diamonds, or Bone-Ace, which won all cards. If no one had either of the above, then the player closest to a score of thirty-one was the victor.⁴⁶

BRAGG. This game got its name from the players who ". . . impose upon the rest that play,. . . by boasting of their cards," and "thus it is to be observ'd, that the witty ordering of this Brag is the most pleasant part of

⁴³Ibid., p. 73.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 62.

⁴⁵Thornbury, Shakespeare's England, 1:142-143 and Ashton, Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne, p. 79.

⁴⁶Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 62.

this game."⁴⁷ According to Lucas, Patrick Hurley was an Irish gamester who could use his looks and gestures to deceive an unskillful opponent at this game. Hurley's expertise at Bragg and other gambling games helped him earn one hundred thousand pounds.⁴⁸

Bragg was played by any number of players with several rounds for betting. Each player was dealt three cards with the third card placed face up. The best card turned up won the first round. The Ace of Diamonds was high. The second round consisted of betting on the suspected worth of each player's hand, with the last one out or the one with the highest hand winning. The third stake was won by the player who scored thirty-one, with the face cards and Aces counting ten each.⁴⁹

COSTLY COLOURS. This card game was played by two players, with the eldest hand going first. Each player was allowed three cards each and the next card from the deck was turned up with the eldest having the option to change the card if he wished. The players then alternately laid down their cards adding up the numerical values at they went. The first player to reach thirty-one or as

⁴⁷ Lucas, Lives of the Gamesters, p. 180.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 180-181.

⁴⁹ Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 277-279.

close as possible without going over was the winner of his opponent's hand and the right to establish the tallies which followed in the second round of play. Six of one color was termed Costly-Colours. The one with the highest score won this round.⁵⁰

CRIBBAGE, CRIBBIDGE. Sir John Suckling reputedly invented the game of Cribbage. "He played at cards rarely well, and did use to practise by himselfe a-bed, and there studyed how the best way of managing the cards could be."⁵¹ Suckling's game quickly became popular, and Pepys recorded learning the game in 1660.⁵²

The five cards used to play Cribbage were dealt out from a pack of sixty-one cards to two players. Each player discarded two cards apiece into a "Crib" which scored for the dealer. The players alternately turned up cards adding the numerical value as they went. The players scored when the cards added up to fifteen in the first round of play and thirty-one in the next round.⁵³

Scores were also reckoned for combinations of cards;

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 60-61.

⁵¹ Aubrey, Brief Lives, p. 287.

⁵² Pepys, Diary, 1:5, January 2, 1660.

⁵³ Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 52.

for example, if one player laid down a three and the next player also laid down a three, the second player scored for making a pair and if the first player lays down a three again, he scored for a three-of-a-kind, or pair-royal. The first player to score sixty-one points won the game and if the opponent was more than seventeen points behind he had to pay double the stakes.⁵⁴

ENGLISH RUFF AND HONOURS, SLAMM. Cotton stated that this popular game was played throughout England and by almost everyone over the age of eight. The game had four players with twelve cards apiece, leaving four cards in the stack. The top card in the pile was turned up and the suit was trumps. The player with the Ace of trumps could get the stack pile and discard four other cards. The four "Honours" were the Ace, King, Queen and Knave. The players used the "Honours" to win the most tricks and thus win the game.⁵⁵

FARO. When there were French guests at the court of Charles II, the card-tables were set up for Faro.⁵⁶

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 52. According to the 1968 Gaming Act in England, Cribbage is the only game one can play for stakes in a British pub. See Taylor, Pub Games, pp. 57-58.

⁵⁵Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 55-56.

⁵⁶Dasent, Nell Gwynne 1650-1687, p. 176.

Any number of players could participate with one of them designated as the banker. Fifty-two cards were placed in a dealing box face up. They were drawn out in pairs, with the first card as a winner and the second card a "loser" in reckoning the paying bets. The players placed bets on the odds of the different cards in the suit of spades coming up either a "winner" or "loser". The banker picked up his winning bets first and then he paid those he lost.⁵⁷

FRENCH RUFF. Either two, four or six players could engage in this game. Each player had five cards and the dealer selected trumps. The King was the highest card followed by the Queen, Knave and Ace. All players were bound to win the highest trump they could and the object was to win five tricks.⁵⁸

GLEEK, GLECKO. This game was of Germanic origin from the word Gluck, which meant luck.⁵⁹ Gleek was a fashionable game in Jacobean England for both noblemen and noblewomen. The Jacobean courtiers who went to Spain with Buckingham and Charles in 1623 were pleased to find that Gleek was also popular there. While in Spain, James I's courtier Endymion Porter sent back to England

⁵⁷Hoyle, Complete and Authoritative Book of Games, pp. 235-238.

⁵⁸Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 58-59.

⁵⁹Coate, Social Life in Stuart England, p. 30.

one hundred sixpences for his wife to use at Gleek.⁶⁰

As with most card games played in Stuart England Gleek was a medium for gambling. Lady Dorset played Gleek for relaxation in her chamber where she lost £27 to Lady Gray.⁶¹

In January 1662, Pepys recorded:

. . . my aunt Wight and my wife and I to Cards, she teaching of us two to play at Gleeke, which is a pretty game but I have not my head so free as to be troubled with it.⁶²

Apparently the game was not too difficult and the next month Pepys was willing to gamble on his prowess at Gleek. He wrote:

Going and coming, we played at Gleeke, and I won 9s. 6d. clear, the most that ever I won in my life. I pray God it may not tempt me to play again.⁶³

Gleek used a pack of forty-four cards with the two's and three's omitted. Only three could play this game and each player had twelve cards. The remainder of the cards were retained by the dealer and could be bid upon if a player hoped to improve his hand. Each card in the game had a particular name and worth; for example, the Ace

⁶⁰Life and Letters of Mr. Endymion Porter: Sometime Gentleman of the Bed-Chamber to King Charles the First, ed. Dorothea Townshend (London: T. Fisher Union, 1897), p. 59.

⁶¹David Mathew, James I (n. p. Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1968), pp. 241-242.

⁶²Pepys, Diary, 3:9, January 13, 1662.

⁶³Ibid., 3:31, February 17, 1662.

was called Tib and it was worth fifteen points. The first round of play was for tricks, and the second round was to determine which player had the most cards from one suit or four aces. In this second round, the players bid against each other crying out, "I'll see it and revie raise it," or "I'll not meddle with it." Cotton notes that although the betting was usually limited to a farthing, half-penny or penny, in play the amount could add up considerably.⁶⁴

LANTERLOO, LOO. This game was played several ways but Cotton gave seventeenth-century readers only two versions. Any number could play and each player received five cards. The eldest hand (or dealer), had the privilege of passing or playing. One was allowed to bet any amount upon any card, and to be Loo'd was never to win a trick. Every trick earned a particular score (the scoring was the same as Whist) and the highest trick was five cards of one suit. The player with the highest score won.⁶⁵

Cotton warned his readers:

As there is cheating (as they say) in all trades, so more particularly intolerable in gaming; as in this for example. If one of the gamesters have four of a

⁶⁴Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 44-47.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 69-70.

suit and he want a fifth, he may for that fifth make an exchange out of his own pocket if he be skil'd in the cleanly art of conveiance; if that fail, some make use of a friend, who never fails to do him that kind office and favour.⁶⁶

In another version of Loo, the dealer and players were penalized monetarily (as opposed to points), if they were Loo'd. The dealer had to pay double the usual amount which was the worth of the five cards he held in his hand if he was the loser.⁶⁷

MAW, FIVE-CARDS. Maw was a favorite game of James I. In the second half of the seventeenth century the game was called Five-Cards.⁶⁸ Maw was an Irish invention played for considerable sums of money. Two players had five cards each. The five of Trumps was the best card, the Ace of Hearts next, then the Ace of Trumps and the Knave. The Ace of Diamonds was the worst card unless Aces were trump.⁶⁹

Before play began the other player was asked by the dealer if he wanted to "five it." If the player said yes,

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 70-71.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 70.

⁶⁸ Lilly Stone, English Sports and Recreations, p. 23.

⁶⁹ Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 59.

the first card in the pack was turned up, and if it was trumps he won the game. When the game was played out the player that won the most cards obtained five points; if he won all the cards his score was doubled.⁷⁰

NEW CUTT. This was a simple card-gambling game.

The game was played in this manner:

that eche of the gamersters should name a carde, and then turninge up the cardes one by one his carde that was first turned uppe shoulde winne.⁷¹

Since false cards were often used at this game, the gains and losses of the players often amounted to several pounds.⁷²

NODDY. This card game was similar to Cribbage. It is uncertain exactly how it was played. In his play *Blurt, Master-Constable*, Middleton alludes to the popularity of the game with female gamesters when he has one character say; "I left her at cards: She'll sit up till you come, because she'll have you play a game at noddy."⁷³

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Mitchell and Leys, *A History of the English People*, p. 389.

⁷²Carl Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen: 1590-1642*, p. 362.

⁷³Middleton, *Works*, 1:58.

This game was a common pastime among the lower classes.⁷⁴

OMBRE, L'OMBRE. This particular card game was popularized by the court of Charles II, and it was one of the favorite games of his queen, Catherine. This Spanish game was initially termed "Hombre" which in Spanish meant a man.⁷⁵ Special three-cornered card-tables were constructed so that the players could maintain the strict concentration the game required.⁷⁶

Ombre was the rage in Augustan England; Swift's journal discloses that he played Putt and threepenny Ombre.⁷⁷ Swift even wrote a poem titled "The Journal of a Gameing Lady of Quality," which chronicled twenty-four hours in the life of an Ombre hostess. Swift's contemporary, Alexander Pope, also composed a poem based on the game of Ombre. "Rape of the Lock," Canto III, utilized the terminology of the game to give the reader a picture of a gambling lady of the period. The poem read in part:

Soon as she spreads her Hand,
 th'Aerial Guard
 Descent, and sit on each important
 Card:

⁷⁴Brewster, "Games and Sports in Shakespeare," p. 40.

⁷⁵Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 262.

⁷⁶Lane, Puritan, Rake and Squire, p. 81.

⁷⁷Swift, Journal to Stella, 2:622.

First, Ariel perch'd upon a Matadore,
 Then each, according to the Rank they
 bore;
 For Sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient
 Race,
 Are, as when Women, wondrous fond of
 Place.
 Behold, four Kings in Majesty
 rever'd
 With hoary Whiskers and a forky Beard;
 And four fair Queens whose hands sustain
 a Flow'r,
 Th' expressive Emblem of their softer Pow'r;
 Four Knaves in Garbs succinct, a trusty
 Band,
 Caps on their heads, and Halberds in their
 hand;
 And Particolour'd Troops, a shining Train,
 Draw forth to Combat on the Velvet Plain
 ⁷⁸

Ombre had several versions; the most common was called renegado. Three players had nine cards each from a pack which was minus the eights, nines and tens. The first player had the liberty to select the Trump. The players could bet on the game, on whether or not to pass on each card.⁷⁹

The strategy and scoring of the game was complicated. Each card of the Black and Red suit had a specific name and value. The Spadillo (Ace of Spades), the Mallillio (black Deuces), and Basto (Ace of Clubs) were called

⁷⁸The Rape Observ'd: An Edition of Alexander Pope's Poem "The Rape of the Lock," Illustrated by Means of Numerous Pictures, from Contemporary Sources, of the People, Places and Things Mentioned, ed. Clarence Tracy (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1974), pp. 35-41.

⁷⁹Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 47.

Matadors or killing cards. The cards of the Red suit offered more Trumps. The object of the game was to win the most tricks. The player who succeeded in securing five tricks of the nine possible was automatically the winner.⁸⁰

PICKET, PIQUET, PICQUET. Picket was played with a deck of thirty-six cards numbering from six and above. The cards were taken at face value except for the Ace which took any card and was worth eleven points. The person who was not the dealer had the right to exchange eight of his cards for eight in the pile. The players then considered the Ruff, i.e., how many points they could obtain from the Sequences (three-in-a-row, three-of-a-kind, and so forth), in their hands as they played for points. A score of one hundred won the game.⁸¹

Cotton listed some interesting rules of the game of Picket. For example:

No man is permitted to discard twice in one dealing.

He that throws up his cards imagining he hath lost the game, mingling them with other cards on the table though afterward he perceive his mistake, yet he is not allowed to take up his cards and play them out.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 47-51.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 39-43.

Lastly, whosoever is found changing or taking back again any of his cards, he shall lose the game, and be accounted a foul player.⁸²

PENNECH. This card game was added in the 1676 edition of The Compleat Gamester.⁸³ Seven cards were dealt to each player, and the first card turned up from the deck was Trumps. The Ace and Coat-cards of the Trump suit were reckoned thus: the Ace was five, the King four, the Queen, three and the Knave, two points. The player who won the first trick turned up another card and that was the new Trump. The highest card was the seven of Diamonds (or Pennech) which won all cards if Trump and all Diamonds if not the Trump suit. The first participant to acquire sixty-one points won.⁸⁴

PLAIN-DEALING. Plain-Dealing was a game played like Whist except the dealer had three cards while his opponent had nine. If the dealer secured the Ace of Diamonds in the deal, he won the game. Cotton did not recommend this pastime although it became popular in the reign of Queen Anne, when any game from the Whist family was the rage.⁸⁵

⁸²Ibid., p. 43.

⁸³Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 263.

⁸⁴Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 70-71.

⁸⁵Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 68 and Ashton, Social Life from the Reign of Queen Anne, p. 79.

POST AND PAIR. Ben Jonson termed Post and Pair a "thirfty and right worshipful" game.⁸⁶ This game was popular in the western part of England in the seventeenth century. This card-gambling game depended heavily upon daring and boldness. Stakes were placed on each round of play, as players "vyed" on the strength of their hands. The first round involved finding the Post, that is, the player with the score closest to twenty-one without exceeding it. The Pair, or second round, was won by the player with the highest pair.⁸⁷

PRIMERO. Primero was one of the favorite pastimes of Jacobean England. There were a number of allusions to this game in the literature of the period and in one of Middleton's plays, Your Five Gallants, the "Bawd Gallant" was named "Primero". The literary expression "to set up one's rest" (that is to stake all) was derived from this game.⁸⁸

⁸⁶John Nichols, The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities of King James the First; His Royal Consort, Family and Court. Collected from Original Manuscripts, Scare Phamplets, Corporation Records, Parochial Registers, etc. etc. Compromising Forty Masques and Entertainments; Ten Civic Pageants, Numerous Original Letters and Annotated Lists of the Peers, Baronets, and Knights, who Received Those Honours During the Reign of King James, 4 vols. (London: 1828, reprint ed., New York: Burt Franklin, 1967), 2: 403.

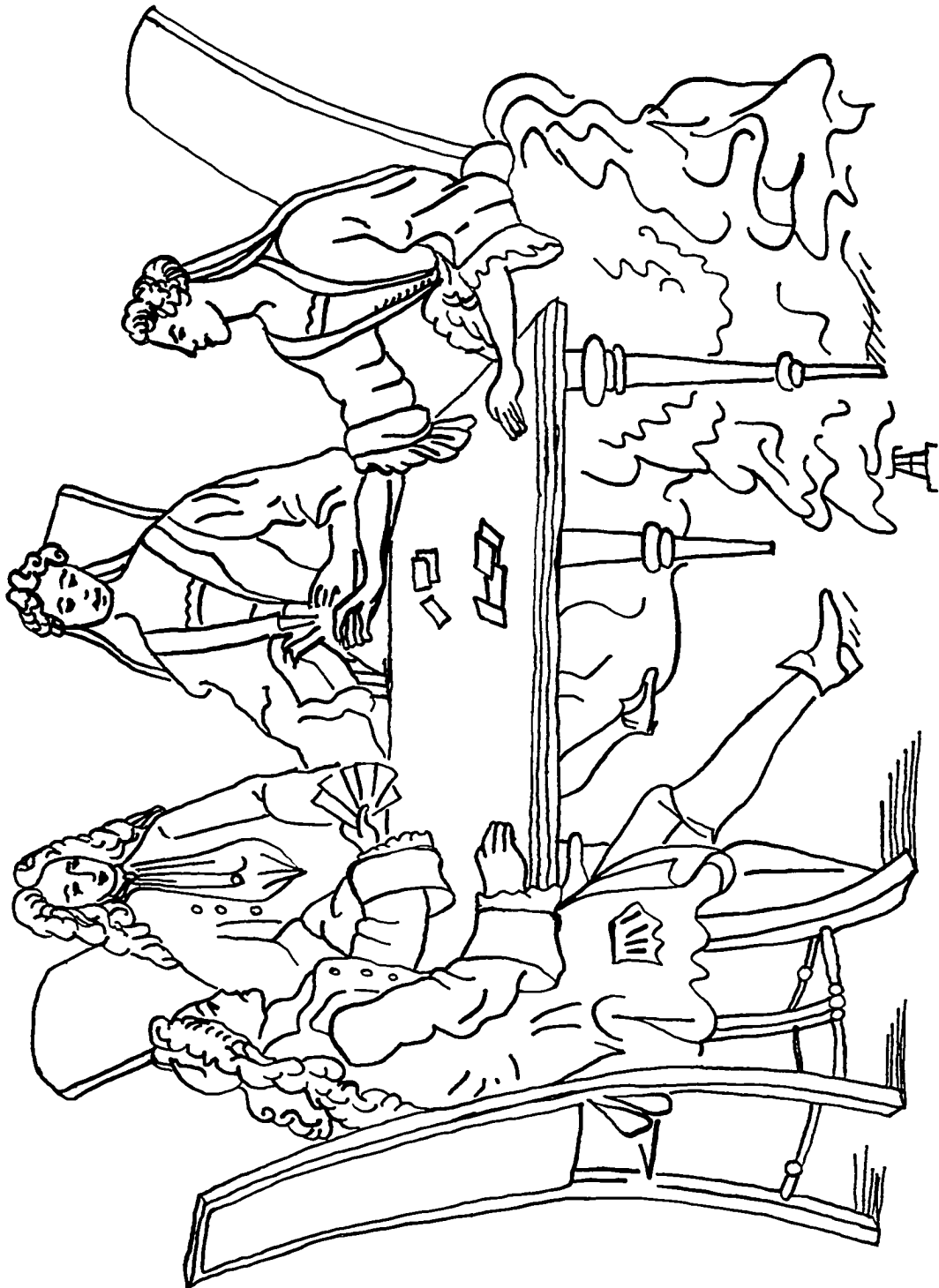
⁸⁷Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 71-72.

⁸⁸Brewster, "Games and Sports in Shakespeare," p. 40.

Plate VII.*

GAMING AT CARDS

* Ashton, Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne, p. 79.



Hvarte revealed his high opinion of the game in Examen de Jngenio, (1616). He wrote:

To play well at Primero, to face and vie, and to hold and give over when time serveth, and by coniectures to know his adversaries game, and the skill of discarding are all workes of the imagination. . . the same not only makeeth profe and demonstration of the difference of the wit, but also discoverth all the vertues and vices in a man. For at everie moment there are offered occasions in this play, by which a man shall discover, what he would doe in matters of great importance, if oportunitie served.⁸⁹

Primero was derived from Spain. It was played like Ombre except it was played with six cards and Ombre used nine cards. A sequence of five of the best cards assured one of winning.⁹⁰

The rooks of Stuart England had an interesting implement for cheating at this game. Primero gloves, as they were called, had white silk knotted in the fingers to enable the player to keep a record of all sixs, sevens, and Aces "without clogging the memory."⁹¹

PUTT. Putt was described by Cotton as an "ordinary rooking game." Each player had three cards. In the first round of play, the players bet on their hands, each daring the other to show them. If one player did not show his

⁸⁹Hvarte, Examen de Jngenio, p. 112.

⁹⁰Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 281-282. See Appendix.

⁹¹Elizabeth Burton, The Jacobeans at Home, p. 292.

cards, then the players competed for tricks. The best Putt cards were the three, the Deuce, then the Ace. Cotton warned his readers to beware of Putt cheaters who:

use the Bent, the Slick, and the Breef; the Bent is a card bended in play which you cut, the Slick is when beforehand the gamester takes a pack of cards, and with a slick-stone smooths all the Putt-cards, that when he come to cut to his adversary with his forefinger above and his thumb about the middle, he slides the rest of the cards off that which was slickt, . . . ⁹²

Sir John Johnson was a noted Scottish profligate who excelled at Putt.

He was so dexterous, that by flipping the cards he would give his antagonist two Treys and an Ace, which good cards tempting him to putt he would secure for himself two Treys and a Duce, which won the game.⁹³

Sir John obtained a great deal of money at this game; however, he quickly lost it and ". . . he was obliged to hang on the charitable disposition of his countrymen; . . . ⁹⁴

QUEEN NAZAREEN. Any number of players could partake in this game. Each player had five cards each. The Queen of Diamonds was Queen Nazareen and the knave of Clubs was Knave Knocher; these cards earned three points and two

⁹²Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 62-65.

⁹³Lucas, Lives of the Gamesters, p. 142.

⁹⁴Ibid.

points respectively. If both sexes played, it was customary for the Knave and Queen to kiss. The players vied for tricks and the first to discard their hand won as many points as there were in the cards of the rest of the players.⁹⁵

WHIST, WHISK. Whist derived its name from the silence which was to be observed when playing the game. This game was played like Ruff and Honours except the twos were taken out of the deck. The object was the same, that is, to win the most tricks and sets.⁹⁶

Whist was one of the most scientific and intellectual card games of the Stuart era. The systems for cheating were often more elaborate than the rules of play and a knowledge of these systems was almost mandatory if one wanted to win.⁹⁷ By using The Compleat Gamester, the seventeenth-century player was able to discern the more prominent methods of cheating.

These methods included overlooking an adversarie's hand, winking or hand-signals between partners and palming or topping in dealing. The most accomplished rogues used to breef the cards. Breefing was accomplished by cutting

⁹⁵Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 68.

⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 55-56.

⁹⁷McDowell, "A Cursory View of Cheating at Whist in the Eighteenth Century," p. 152.

a little from the edges of all the cards that were not Honours (or court cards), so that these smaller (or lower) cards were dealt to your adversaries.⁹⁸

In Restoration England, Whist was regarded as a game for the lower classes.⁹⁹ It was not until the Augustan Age that Whist rose in popularity to become the card game of the genteel.¹⁰⁰

WIT AND REASON. Wit and Reason was played by two participants; one had all the red cards and the other all the black. Players laid down their cards one by one, adding the numerical values as they went. The first player to score thirty-one was the victor.¹⁰¹

Dicing Games

Joseph Strutt, writing in 1800, believed that dicing was the oldest amusement of man.¹⁰² Dice were played in England as early as the twelfth or thirteenth century.¹⁰³ The seventeenth century was an era of manic dice-playing.

⁹⁸Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 56-57.

⁹⁹Lane, Puritan, Rake and Squire, p. 82.

¹⁰⁰McDowell, "A Cursory View of Cheating at Whist in the Eighteenth Century," pp. 162-163.

¹⁰¹Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 66-67.

¹⁰²Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 245.

¹⁰³Taylor, Pub Games, p. 183.

Statues against dicing were enacted as early as the reign of Richard II.¹⁰⁴ In an attempt to promote sports and pastimes of a military nature, Henry VII also added dicing to his list of unlawful amusements.¹⁰⁵ These ordinances were loosely enforced under the early Stuarts. James I found games of hazard unappealing, and he was "unable to agree with the curiositie of some learned men of our age," but he recommended some dicing games to his son as being suitable for "foule and stormie weather."¹⁰⁶

Charles I used dice in an interesting manner. In July, 1635, he sent Sir William Petty to Venice to bid on a collection of paintings to be brought back to England. After the collection was purchased it was to be:

. . . divided in four parts by some men skilful [sic] in paintings, and then every one interested in the shares or some for them shall throw the dice severally; and, whosoever throws most shall choose his share first, and so in order, every one shall choose after first, as he casts most, and shall take their shares freely to their own uses, as they shall fall them.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, pp. 246-247.

¹⁰⁵ Maistrov, Probability Theory: A Historical Sketch, p. 13.

¹⁰⁶ Wymer, Sport in England: A History of Two Thousand Years of Games and Pastimes, p. 81.

¹⁰⁷ The Letters, Speeches and Proclamations of King Charles I, ed. Sir Charles Petrie (1935; reprint ed., New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968), pp. 81-82. July 8, 1635.

Perhaps Charles I realized that dicing abolished favoritism and placed all the courtiers on an equal footing when paintings or other royal presents were doled out.

Allusions to dicing were frequent in late Tudor and Stuart literature. Shakespeare referred to dicing in his play, Henry IV, Part I; ". . . were it good To set the exact wealth of all our stakes- All at one cast? to set so rich a main on the hazard of one doubtful hour?"¹⁰⁸

Puritan writers like Northbrooke and Ascham launched a vigorous attack on dicing. George Whetstone agreed with them and he wrote:

. . . I heard a distemperate dicer solemnly swear that he faithfully believed, that dice were first made of the bones of a witch and cards of her skin, in which there hath ever since remained in enchantment, yt whosoever once taketh delight in either, he shall never have power utterly to leave them,¹⁰⁹

Puritan attempts to control dicing were largely unsuccessful despite a 1657 statute which required a person betting at dice to pay twice his winnings as a fine.¹¹⁰

Dicing enjoyed a resurgence at the court of Charles II. In this same period, the rogue Joe Haynes even played at dice with a horse by putting the dice in the mouth of the

¹⁰⁸ Shakespeare, Works, 1:547, Act IV, Scene i.

¹⁰⁹ Staunton, ed. The Complete Illustrated Shakespeare, 1:100.

¹¹⁰ Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, p. 139, and Traill and Mann, eds. Social England, p. 431.

horse who then dropped them on the ground. Haynes then threw his dice and compared his score to the horse's to determine who had won.¹¹¹

In the reign of Queen Anne dicing was more popular and not as censured. Swift was able to pen a riddle concerning dice.

On a Pair of Dice

We are little brethen twain
 Arbiters of loss and gain,
 Many to are counters run,
 Some are made, and some undone:
 But men find it to their cost,
 Few are made, but numbers lost.
 Though we play them tricks for ever
 Yet they always hope our favour.¹¹²

In 1711, a duty of 6d. was imposed on pairs of dice.¹¹³

In the reign of the Stuart monarchs, dice were usually made of bone, ivory or silver.¹¹⁴ Dice were placed in a hollow cylinder of wood called the dice-box, where they were shaken and then thrown out upon the table. Royalty

¹¹¹ Lucas, Lives of the Gamesters, pp. 191-192.

¹¹² The Aldine Edition of the British Poets: The Poetical Works of Jonathan Swift, 3 vols. (London: William Pickering, 1833), 2:298.

¹¹³ Ashton, Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne, p. 80.

¹¹⁴ Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 247.

and wealthy noblemen had silver dicing boxes.¹¹⁵ There were even a dicing machine to shake the dice. The dice were thrown in the top, spun and then thrown into one of six numbered compartments which determined the amount of the throw.¹¹⁶

A dice-board was also used in some forms of dicing. The board was divided by lines into ten spaces, and the value of the cast depended upon the numbers of the die and value of the particular space into which it fell.¹¹⁷

The Jacobean courtier, Lord Herbert, warned Stuart gamesters of ". . . dicing-houses where cheaters meet and cozen young gentlemen of all their money."¹¹⁸ Cotton also admonished gamesters to be careful of false dice which were usually introduced late at night when the gamester was tired. False dice had a variety of forms and names. High-Fullams ran 4, 5, 6; while Low-Fullams ran 1, 2, 3. These dice were fitted with a hog's bristle or quicksilver which shifted the weight of the dice to one side. False dice were sold in many places around Stuart

¹¹⁵ Godfrey, Social Life Under the Stuarts, pp. 30-31.

¹¹⁶ Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 246.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Autobiography, p. 42.

London for eight shillings, while an ordinary pair sold for sixpence.¹¹⁹

If a gamester did not have false dice, he could make use of false dicing boxes. Edward Somerset invented a "dextrous dicing box," which held two pairs of dice. One pair was straight and one pair was false; one played for awhile with the straight dice and then by hitting the box on the table the right way he released a false bottom and the crooked dice.¹²⁰ Stuart gamesters used these cheating methods at the following games, and, as with cards, these cheating techniques and implements helped sway the odds in the favor of the clever gamester.

HAZARD, HAZZARD. In 1674, Cotton wrote that Hazzard is a proper name for this game, for it speedily makes a man or undoes him.¹²¹ Hazzard was a game of pure chance in which skill and knowledge were not required; provided of course, false methods were not used. In this game, the novice could compete on equal terms with the greatest gamester. The popularity of this game accounted in part for the rise of probability theory and the books of

¹¹⁹Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 6-7.

¹²⁰Elizabeth Burton, The Jacobeans at Home, pp. 291-292.

¹²¹Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 82.

calculations and odds released in the Augustan age.¹²²

The game was played with two dice and any number of players. Each player rolled the dice in turn while calling a number between five and nine. The number called was termed the Main. Each player, including the dicer placed bets for or against the dicer's call. The first number the dicer rolled (as opposed to the number he called out) was his winning number or Chance. The Main was a losing number. For example, if the dicer called out seven (Main) and rolled a five (Chance), then he won every time he threw a five or any of its multiples and lost whenever he threw a seven. If the dicer threw a two or three he was automatically out of the game.¹²³

When Stuart gamesters played Hazard at the court or at a licensed ordinary, the odds for or against a number were called out by the Groom Porter. If the caster's Chance was the better odd, he had the option of increasing his original stake to any amount he chose. The other players were required only to match two-thirds of the dicer's bet.¹²⁴

¹²²Maistrov, Probability Theory: A Historical Sketch, p. viii, and Boulton, The Amusements of Old London, 1:131.

¹²³Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 82-83.

¹²⁴Boulton, The Amusements of Old London, 1:135-136.

There were a number of allusions to the game of Hazard in Stuart literature. In Shirley's play The Gamester, for example, the main character was named Will Hazard. Gramont proudly recorded his prowess at Hazard in his Memoirs;

They were playing at hazard; and he who holds the dice is supposed to have the advantage, the rooks did the Chevalier de Grammont the honour out of compliment: he had the dice in his hand. . . The rooks secure of their odds, were betting against him at a high rate, and he took all.¹²⁵

INN AND INN. This game was popular in the ordinaries of the seventeenth century. It was played by two or three participants, with each having four dice. "Inn" was when the caster threw a pair of Doubles; "Inn and Inn" occurred if the pairs of dice were Doubles and "Out" resulted with no doubles in a cast, one lost with "Out" and the score was even with an "Inn". Whenever an "Inn" was thrown the caster had to increase the stakes.¹²⁶

KNUCKLEBONES. This was a game played in ancient times. The game consisted of fortune-telling with dice or knuckle-bones. It is uncertain how well known this

¹²⁵Hamilton, Memoirs of Count Grammont, pp. 365-366.

¹²⁶Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 80-81.

particular game was in Stuart England; but The Dutch Fortune-Teller, (1650), was a guide to fortune-telling by casting dice.¹²⁷ The book may have been based on Knucklebones. Seventeenth century gamesters knew of the game of Knucklebones because Sir Thomas Browne translated and explained references to the game in ancient Greek and Roman writings. Browne explained:

The ancients played first with a simple die, later with many, mostly four - where agreement of the faces was the unluckiest throw and called a Vulture - where difference of all the faces was luckiest and called Basilic. His unlucky throw makes four Vultures, I pick up the dice, I throw a Basilic, that is, all with unlike faces, so I win the whole bank.¹²⁸

MUM, MUMCHANCE. Mum was a dicing game similar to Hazard. A strict silence was to be observed while the game was played and the term "Mum" was spoken for silence.¹²⁹ The game was played in Tudor and Jacobean England

¹²⁷ Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp. 238-239, and The Works of Sir Thomas Browne, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, 4 vols. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), 3:164.

¹²⁸ The Whole Works of William Browne, of Tavistock and of the Inner Temple; Now First Collected and Edited with a Memoir of the Poet and Notes, ed. W. Carew Hazlitt, 2 vols. (Kensington, London: The Roxburghe Library, 1868), 2:164.

¹²⁹ Mitchell and Leys, A History of the English People, pp. 388-389.

where Jonson mentioned it in his play, The Alchemist.¹³⁰
The exact rules have not survived.

NOVUM. This was another dicing game played by five or six persons. The correct name was Novem Quinque, since the two winning throws were nine and five.¹³¹

PASSAGE. Passage was a game at dice played by two participants. Each player had three dice; one won with a pair of Doubles above ten and lost with Doubles which numbered less than ten. Cotton asserted that if one did not have a false dice-box, he could gain the advantage by palming the dice.¹³²

Gambling Games

Gambling games themselves were popular in Stuart England as a reflection of the gambling fever which possessed the noblemen and gentry of Stuart England. Many of these aristocrats were attracted by the prospect that a lucky person could better despite the inequalities

¹³⁰Williams, Henry VIII and His Court, p. 46 and Ben Jonson, eds. C. H. Hereford Percy and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1950), 5:397.

¹³¹Brewster, "Sports and Games in Shakespeare," p. 40.

¹³²Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, pp. 81-82.

of the social system.¹³³ Gambling games included:

CROSS AND PILE (HEADS OR TAILS). This simple gambling game was first introduced at court in medieval England. Edward II was particularly fond of the game. The game was played by any number of participants. One player tossed the coin after the others had placed wagers on whether the coin would land face up or face down.¹³⁴

FAST AND LOOSE, PRICK AT THE LOOP, PRICKING AT THE BELT. In this game a leather belt was folded intricately so that one fold appeared to be in the middle. A player would then thrust a knife into this fold as the belt lay upon the table. Wagers were made as to whether or not the belt was fast to the table or loose.¹³⁵

This game was usually played by rogues to cozen money from innocent players. Beaumont and Fletcher in The Wild Goose Chase, had the heroines reject a suitor because:

He is too nimble
And plays at fast and loose too learnedly
For a plain-meaning woman.¹³⁶

¹³³Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp. 20-21.

¹³⁴Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 266.

¹³⁵Brewster, "Games and Sports in Shakespeare," p. 35.

¹³⁶The Works of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, ed. A. R. Waller, 10 vols. (Cambridge: University Press, 1912), 4:348.

LOTTERIES. Under the early Stuarts, private possessions were generally disposed of by lottery, not by auctioning.¹³⁷ Lotteries were also a pastime at the private parties of aristocrats. To buy popularity the wealthy would make a ceremonial lottery of their pictures or jewels with tickets at nominal prices.¹³⁸

These lotteries continued in the first half of the seventeenth century despite condemnation by the Puritans. Calvin had issued strictures against gambling pastimes and many English Puritans reiterated his proclamation.¹³⁹ One Puritan tract stated:

Because we finde not in the Scriptures any dispensation for recreation by lotterie, . . . i followeth, that God who only disposeth the Lot touching the event, and is, therefore, a principall actor, is not to bee set on worke by lotterie¹⁴⁰

Lotteries continued in Stuart England and after the Restoration, they acquired official character and state support when the crown used lotteries to generate revenue.

¹³⁷ Traill and Mann, Social England, 4:117.

¹³⁸ Burke, English Night-Life from Norman Curfew to Present Black-out, p. 7.

¹³⁹ Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, p. 39.

¹⁴⁰ Ashton, The History of Gambling in England, p. 31.

Perhaps this is one reason why games of chance became so popular after Charles assumed the throne.¹⁴¹ The approval of the monarch guaranteed the respectability of this particular form of gambling.

The lottery system which developed under Charles II was defended by Sir William Petty in Treatise of Taxes and Contributions, 1667. He wrote:

A Lottery is a tax upon unfortunate, self-conceited fools. . . Because the world abounds with this kind of fool, it is not fit that every man that will may cheat every man that would be cheated, but it is ordained that the Sovereign should have the guardianship of these fools, or that some favourite should beg the Sovereign's right of taking advantage of such men's folly.¹⁴²

Because they were popular lotteries continued to be controlled. In 1693, the lotteries sanctioned by William and Mary earned £1, 991, which was more income than the rent from land or lands seized. Soon, the monarchs were approving million pound lotteries which were known as Royal-Oak lotteries. Evelyn assessed the lotteries as "unreasonable Taxes and Impostions layed on us by the Parliament to maintaine an hithertoo successles Warr with France. . . ." ¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Caillois, Man, Play, and Games, p. 116.

¹⁴² Scott, ed. Every One a Witness: The Stuart Age; Commentaries of an Era, p. 170.

¹⁴³ Evelyn, Diary, 5:169, March 22, 1694.

In 1699, "An Act for Suppressing of Lotteries" was passed by Parliament; but the ban was short-lived and they were officially revived in 1709 with a £1,500,000 lottery.¹⁴⁴ In this lottery there were 150,000 tickets issued at £10 each, and nine percent interest was allowed on them for thirty-two years. Prized from £1,000 to £5 per annum corresponded to 3,750 tickets; the rest of the tickets were blanks with odds of thirty nine to one. As a consolation, each blank ticket was entitled to fourteen shillings per annum during the thirty-two years. The tickets for this lottery sold quickly.¹⁴⁵

In Augustan England, private goods continued to be sold by lottery and many of these were of an illicit nature. Lotteries also spawned insurance schemes which would even insure marriages. These illicit activities were suppressed by Parliament in 1712.¹⁴⁶

ROLY-POLY ROULETTE. This game was played at the courts of William and Mary and Anne, especially by Sarah,

¹⁴⁴Ashton, Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne, p. 87, and Ewald, Rogues, Royalty and Reporters: The Age of Queen Anne through its Newspapers, pp. 114-115.

¹⁴⁵Ashton, Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne, p. 87.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

Duchess of Marlborough.¹⁴⁷ Roly-Poly involved betting on a certain number, painted on the rim of a wheel which was then spun. If the wheel stopped on the number that the participant had selected, he was the winner.

In November 1710, Roly-Poly was condemned by an Act of Queen Anne. It read in part:

. . . That of late divers Evil-disposed Persons have set up many Lotteries in several Places in this Kingdom in Imitation of the said Royal-Oak Lottery, called Roly-Poly, . . . and thereby have unjustly and fradulently got to themselves great sums of Mony. . . which tends to the utter Ruin and Impoverishment of many Families. . .¹⁴⁸

Despite the official censure of specific games of chance, one can deduce from the popularity of this specific type of game that the gambling element had increased throughout the seventeenth century. This increase of games of chance under the later Stuarts, may have been due to a number of factors. These included those of an economic, political and social nature.

The emergence of a fluid monetary economic market favored profits even if they were secured through gaming.

¹⁴⁷ Dasent, Nell Gwynne 1650-1687, pp. 176-177.

¹⁴⁸ Ewald, Rogues, Royalty and Reporters: The Age of Queen Anne through its Newspapers, pp. 114-115.

The existence of a number of professional gamblers attested to the profitability of games of chance. Stuart gamblers were well aware that the margin of gain could be augmented if one utilized cheating techniques which multiplied the favorability of the odds. This element of control, in a society in flux, may have appealed to some gamblers.

Political and social conditions also accounted for an increase in the popularity of games of chance. The dissolution of the Puritan theocracy allowed a resurgence and increased visibility of games of chance, especially as the number of gaming locales were extended. Promotion of the implements of chance games to generate revenue for the crown possibly contributed to the popularity of cards, dice and gambling games.

Gamblers concerned with achieving or maintaining their social status may have recreated with cards, dice or other games of chance in an effort to imitate royal and court gamblers. Gambling especially with cards, was enhanced by the willingness of female gamblers to engage in games of chance. Many of these female gamblers may have been emulating the competitiveness of other elements of Stuart society as they exercised their option for gambling.

"The Fifth Song"

Who so hath seene yong Lads (to
sport themselves)
Run in a low ebbe to the sandy
shelves:
Where seriously they worke in
digging wels, . . .
Or with the Pibbles play at
handy-dandy.
-William Browne*

CHAPTER VII

CHILDREN'S GAMES AND GAMING IN STUART ENGLAND

The stability and universality of games is manifested in the games children play. Studies of children at play have revealed that playing and gaming develop certain skills and competencies, including self-awareness, imagery skill, creativity, flexibility, sensitivity and role models are a few of the positive benefits of play.¹

In the early seventeenth century little attention was paid to children. The extended family was the norm and the children of aristocratic and gentry families

* William Browne, Works, 1:125.

¹ Dorothy G. and Jerome L. Singer, Partners in Play: A Step-by-Step Guide to Imaginative Play in Children (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1977), pp. 4-8.

were usually regarded as a means of extending the material and social status of the larger kin group. An upper-class child was almost a form of family property, not an immature personality to be developed.² Ideally, the total subordination of the child's will to that of his parents and authority would insure his usefulness and check his innate wickedness derived from Original Sin.³

Childhood was but a brief introduction to the heavy responsibilities of adulthood. From the ages of seven to nine most aristocratic Stuart children were apprenticed in the homes of kinsmen or friends for instruction in proper behavior and social manners.⁴ In Stuart society's hierarchical structure all education was vocational. A gentleman's son concentrated on a classical education so he could enter one of the universities or Inns of Court. Frequent gaming could detract a child from his studies and thwart his career opportunities.⁵ James Cleland in The Insitution of a Young Nobleman (1616) condemned any

²Pinchbeck and Hewitt, Children in English Society, 1:306-307.

³Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800, pp. 405-406.

⁴Pinchbeck and Hewitt, Children in English Society, 1:299 and 26.

⁵Bridenbaugh, Vexed and Troubled Englishmen: 1590-1642, p. 315.

academic study which was not put to use in the service of the king and his court. Cleland cynically stated that if the student would not study, the time could be better spent on the tennis court where it was hoped that the son would not gamble away the family estate.⁶

The institutional development and acceptance of formal education in schools during this period reflected the new concept that the welfare of the child was the direct responsibility of the parent. The isolation of the child from adult society accounted in part for the individualization of the family. Yet, the brevity of life and the pressures of unsettled estates decreed that aristocratic children were introduced early into the adult world. A child was expected to think and behave as a mature person by the age of seven or eight.⁷ Evidence for this fact is reflected in the gaming habits of Stuart children.

Early in the seventeenth century only the most enlightened thought that play and games were essential to a boy or girl's physical or emotional development. John Brinsley, an authority on education, was one of the first to recognize this need. In A Consolation for our Grammar Schools (1662), he advocated that children need

⁶Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, p. 76.

⁷Pinchbeck and Hewitt, Children in English Society, 1:38-40 and 298-307.

one afternoon a week free for recreation.⁸ Even the liberal Brinsley believed the ingenious child would find his best playing in learning.⁹

Any limitations placed on the play of children in Stuart era can be attributed to parental concerns. The restrictions may have been biological due to the high mortality rate of the children; for example, Prince Henry, eldest son of James I, suffered a fatal illness after a game at tennis. Although the cause of his death was not due to the game itself, many believed that becoming overheated at tennis did not help his condition.¹⁰

Many Stuart parents, particularly those inclined towards Puritanism, controlled their children's games for religious or moral reasons. Games with an element of chance were especially offensive. James Balmford in a tract titled A Short and Plaine Dialouge concerning the unlawfulness of playing at Cards, or Tables, or any other Game consisting in Chance (1593) stated:

⁸Roger Hart, English Life in the Seventeenth-Century (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1970), p. 55.

⁹Notestein, The English People on the Eve of Colonization: 1603-1630, p. 124.

¹⁰Lieberman, Playfulness: Its Relationship to Imagination and Creativity, p. 8.

. . . the proper end of a Lot, an object used to decided a matter by chance as of an oth (Heb. vi. 16) is to end a controversie: . . . by using Lots in sport, we tempt the Almighty, vainly desiring the manifestation of his speciall providence in his immediate disposing. Lastly, whatsoever God hath sanctified to a proper end, is not to be perverted to a worse (Matth. xxi. 12, 13). But God hath sanctified Lots to a proper end, namely to end controversies (Num. xxvi. 55; Pro. xviii. 18), therefore man is not to pervert them to a worse, namely to play, and, by playing to get away another man's money, which without controversie, is his owne.¹¹

Puritan schoolmasters could be dismissed for frequent card-playing and dicing.¹²

Puritan parents in the seventeenth century were irritated by Henry Peacham's popular book The Compleat Gentleman (1626; 1634; 1661). Peachman himself was a tutor who favored games as an easy way to a child's heart and the basis for a good teacher-pupil relationship. Peacham not only stated that games were healthy but that they were effective tools for academic learning. Suppression of the controversial work was threatened during the Interregnum.¹³

¹¹ Ashton, The History of Gambling in England, p. 30.

¹² Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, pp. 140-141.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 77-81.

The educational reformers of the 1640's and 1650's encouraged a more practical education for students. The "Hartlib Circle" as these reformers were termed, numbered John Milton and William Petty among their members. In 1648, Petty wrote The Advice of W. P. to Mr. Samuel Hartlib for the Advancement of Some Particular Parts of Learning, in which he advocated that only the ablest and best should become teachers.¹⁴ Petty also penned Directions, in 1686, for the instruction of his sons. In this work Petty recommended teaching "riding, dancing, leaping, vaulting . . . tennis . . . the use of games of meer skill (as cards and dice &c.) and composed of chance, exercise, and skill."¹⁵

¹⁴Roberta J. Park, " 'The Advancement of Learning': Expressions of Concern for Health and Exercise in English Proposals for Educational Reform- 1640-1660," Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education Vol 8 no. 2 (1977): 56-61. The Hartlib Circle, c. 1640-1660, was an international society of corresponding scholars who sought to extend both the Christian religion and a new experimental method in universal learning. Hartlib, a Polish immigrant to England was the major force behind this movement. Petty also believed no child under seven, or economically disadvantaged, should be denied an education.

¹⁵The Petty Papers: Some Unpublished Writings of Sir William Petty, ed. The Marquis of Lansdowne, 2 vols. (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1967), 2:7.

William Petty's works show that Stuart children learned adult games, including gambling, at an early age. In An Examination Paper, Petty established a timetable for the accomplishment of certain tasks. From age nine to eleven, a child should master "chesse, games at cards (as Gleeke, Cribbage, Hombre) [and] at Dice (as Backgammon, Trecktrac)."¹⁶ Richard Baxter in his Autobiography avows that as a boy at the age of ten he was living in a state of sin; "for I was somewhat excessively addicted to play, and that with covetousness, for money."¹⁷ Charles Cotton also confirmed this impression that children gamed at an early age when he stated that any child of eight had a complete knowledge of the complicated card game Whist.¹⁸

The education and recreation of children continued to be of interest throughout the century. John Locke in Some Thoughts Concerning Education (1693), gave expression to a more liberal attitude towards the education of children and, by contrast, a more conservative attitude towards games as a part of that education. As an exile from the court of James II, Locke developed his theories on the instruction of children for the private use of the

¹⁶Petty, Works, 2:8

¹⁷Baxter, Autobiography, p. 5.

¹⁸Cotton, The Compleat Gamester, p. 55.

son of Edward Clarke.¹⁹

Locke's book coincided with the overthrow of the divine right monarchy, the rejection of the doctrine of passive obedience, the granting of moderate religious toleration and the passage of the Bill of Rights. These political changes reflected a general relaxation of the rigid hierarchical practices in Stuart society, and Locke warned against excessive permissiveness in education. Locke also advocated an educational curriculum which used psychological manipulation rather than physical coercion to train a child. The old repressive mode of education evidenced in Jacobean England had yielded to a newer more permissive mode in the Augustan age. The uniqueness of each child was being acknowledged.²⁰ Yet Locke wanted the training of his pupil to insure that the child would be a useful member of society, as well as knowledgeable. He believed that gaming detracted from the fulfillment of this goal.

¹⁹ Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne, p. 195 and Park, "The Advancement of Learning: Expressions of Concern for Health and Exercise in English Proposals for Educational Reform- 1640-1660", p. 60.

²⁰ Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800, pp. 407-408.

It has been nothing but the vanity and pride of greatness and riches that has brought unprofitable and dangerous pastimes, as they are called, into fashion, and persuaded people into a belief that the learning or putting their hands to anything that was useful could not be a diversion fit for a gentleman. This has been that which has given cards, dice, and drinking so much credit in the world; and a great many throw away their spare hours in them . . . as to cards and dice, I think the safest and best way is never to learn any play upon them, and so to be incapacitated for those dangerous temptations and encroaching wasters of useful time.²¹

Despite Locke's condemnation of cards and dice, they remained popular throughout the seventeenth-century for both children and adults. Yet cards and dice were only a small percentage of the indoor games played by children in Stuart England. As with all children, games utilizing kinetic energy were also popular. A description of a few of the more popular games follows.

BOARD GAMES. In Stuart England, children and adults played Nine Men's Morris, Fox and Geese and Chess; however there were not board games designed as educational tools for children only. In seventeenth-century France, Pierre du Val had used gambling games with painted board and dice to teach geography and history. It has been said that Louis XIV learned his lessons that way. It is

²¹Locke, "Some Thoughts Concerning Education", pp. 381-382.

conceivable that this game was imported and played at the English court. The first dice game using a board was not introduced into England until 1759 when John Jefferys marketed the educational game, "A Journey through Europe, or the Play of Geography."²²

BLIND MAN'S BLUFF, HOODMAN BLIND. This was a popular game with both children and adults. Pepys recorded that his wife and friends played Blind Man's Bluff, and Gramont said this game was Frances Stuart's favorite amusement at the court of Charles II.²³ In this game a player was blinded and then buffeted by his companions until he caught one of them, who in turn became the person blinded. It was called Hoodman's Blind because the player was blinded by having his hood turned around.²⁴ The person who was blinded was nicknamed "Blind Billy."²⁵

In literature the term "hoodman-blind" designated an inability to see the facts or to discern reality. In Shakespeare's play, Hamlet used this illusion when he

²²J. H. Plumb, "The Commercialization of Childhood," Horizon 18 (Autumn 1976): 27.

²³Pepys, Diary, 4:357 and Hamilton, Memoirs of Count Grammont, p. 160.

²⁴Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 308.

²⁵Gomme, The Traditional Games of England, Scotland and Ireland, 1:37-39.

questioned the Queen about his father's death; "What devil was't that hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?"²⁶

BOB-CHERRY. This was a game for children in which a cherry was hung above the player's head obligating him to jump in order to catch it in his mouth. As the candidate was often unsuccessful, Arbuthnot said, "Bob-cherry teaches at once two noble virtues, patience and constancy; the first in adhering to the pursuit of one end, the latter in bearing a disappointment." In northern England, apples were substituted for cherries, and this game was traditional on the eve of All-Hallows.²⁷

CARDS. Children learned to play adult card games at an early age and that these games were condemned by many who agreed with Ascham that "the nurse of dice and cards is wearisome idleness, enemy of virtue, the drowner of youth that tarrieth in it."²⁸ Cards themselves and the playing of cards may have been less offensive when educational cards were produced in the mid-seventeenth century. They were used to teach the classics, history and geography

²⁶ Shakespeare, Works, 3:370. From Hamlet, Scene III, Act iv.

²⁷ Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, pp. 307-308.

²⁸ The Whole Works of Roger Ascham, Now First Collected and Revised, with a Life of the Author, 4 vols. Reverend Dr. Giles, ed., (London: John Russell Smith, 1864), 2:40.

while the card-player participated in his game. Educational cards were usually imported from France and sold by book-sellers for both children and adults.²⁹

The commercialization of gaming implements designed principally for children was made possible by social and economic developments which created an aristocratic and upper-class market of parents with the money to buy such relative extravagances for both their children and themselves. Large numbers of people were now willing to pamper their children with frivolous expenditures like educational playing cards which in turn reflected a parent's wealth and liberal attitude.³⁰

One of the most popular sets of educational cards was produced by H. Winstanley at Littlebury in 1665. These cards were titled:

All the principall Nations of the World,
presented in their Habits or Fashions of
Dressing with a Prospect of Their Capital
Citys and a Geographycal Description of
the Provinces and Citys and Remarkable
Places in and Belonging or Depending to
Each Government with an Observation of
their Fruitfulness, Trading, Religions,
and as Much of History of all as Could
be Contained in so Small a Space.

²⁹Plumb, "The Commercialization of Childhood," p. 27.

³⁰Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800, p. 411.

Winstanley described the far lands and their citizens and included a picture of a representative inhabitant of the area. The hearts were Europe, the diamonds, Asia; the spades, Africa and the clubs, America which included "Jamestown and the Verginians" and "Boston and the New English."³¹

It is clear that certain games played by the aristocratic children of seventeenth-century England were designed to combine fun and learning. Some cards were produced as games in themselves. In 1656, "Scholer's Practiall Cards" were published by F. Jackson. A book of instructions with the cards told how to spell, write, cipher and cast accounts with the cards.³²

A curious alphabet game on cards also originated during the Protectorate. Each card had two rows of letters upon it and a space in the middle with a different couplet. The usual suit signs were placed diagonally on each card and the value was indicated by Roman numerals; the court cards and aces were marked by the letters L, C, D, and M. Unfortunately, no rules have survived.³³

³¹Hargrave, A History of Playing Cards and a Bibliography of Cards and Gaming, p. 179.

³²Ibid., pp. 172-173.

³³Ibid.

The cards themselves would sometimes serve as implements children's games. The puerile Frances Stuart was observed:

building castles of cards, while deepest play was going on in her apartments, where you saw her surrounded by eager courtiers, who handed her the cards, or young architects, who endeavoured to imitate her.³⁴

CROSS-QUESTIONS AND CROOKED ANSWERS. This was a popular game among juvenile players. The participants sat in a circle and each was asked in a whisper a question by the player on her left. The player then received an answer to a question from the player on her right. The object of the game was to be able to recite both the question and answer correctly.³⁵

DROP, CAP, DROP HANDEKCHIEF, HAND-IN-HAND-OUT. In this game the player dropped his cap or her handkerchief at the feet of another player whom he wanted to chase him. This game was probably the origin of the expression "set her cap at him."³⁶

EVEN OR ODD, CHUCK-HALFPENNY, DUCK AND DRAKE. Even or Odd was a simple game of chance in which one person

³⁴Anthony Hamilton, Memoirs of Count Grammont, p. 160.

³⁵Gomme, The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland, pp. 82-83. This game is mentioned in Wilson's Inconstant Lady (1614).

³⁶Godfrey, Home Life Under the Stuarts: 1603-1649, p. 18.

concealed in his hand any number of small pieces, such as Beans, nuts or money. His opponent called even or odd and the objects were then exposed and counted; if the objects matched the call the one who hid the items lost, or if the contrary he won.³⁷

HANDY DANDY. This game was a simple guessing-game closely allied to Even or Odd. One player held a small object in his hand, and then holding out his fists asked the other which hand contained the item. If the guess was correct the two exchanged roles, if not, the game continued as before.³⁸

HIDE AND SEEK, ALL-HID, HARRY-RACKET, HOOP AND HIDE. This "old infant play," as termed by Shakespeare, involved a few players striking out from a home base to seek out others who had hidden themselves. Those who could remain hidden and get to home base uncaught were entitled to hide themselves again, but those who were caught were forced to become seekers in the next round of play.³⁹

³⁷Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 306.

³⁸Brewster, "Games and Sports in Shakespeare," p. 36.

³⁹Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 301. Reference to this game appears in Love's Lost Labour, Scene IV, Act iii; "All hid, all hid; an old infant play". Shakespeare, Works, 1:76.

James II used this juvenile game to escape his captors in 1646 during the Civil War. The Duke of York and his brother, Henry, and sister, Elizabeth, played Hide and Seek in the walled garden of the palace where they were held captive. Lady Halkett in her autobiography, described the Duke of York's successful attempt to foil his captors.

All things beeing now ready, upon the 20 of Aprill, 1648, in the evening, was the time resolved on for ye Duke's escape, and in order to that itt was designed for a week before every night as soon as ye Duke had suped, hee and those Servants that attended his Highnese (till the Earle of Northumberland and ye rest of the house had suped) wentt to a Play called hide and seek, and sometimes hee would hide himselfe so well that in halfe an howers time they could not find him. His Highnese had so used them to this that when hee wentt really away they thought hee was butt att the usuall sport.⁴⁰

Disguised as a girl, James joined his confederate Colonel Bumpfield and successfully sailed to Holland where he was united with other members of the exiled Royal Family.⁴¹

HOCUS POCUS. This children's game was a Puritan game which has been described as a blasphemous mockery

⁴⁰ Lady Anne Halkett, The Memoirs of Anne, Laky Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshawe, edited with an Introduction by John Loftis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 24-25.

⁴¹ Peter Earle, The Life and Times of James II (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), pp. 28-29.

of the religious belief Hoc est Corpus. It is unclear exactly how this game was played.⁴²

HOT COCKLES, from the French hautes-coquilles, was a game in which a player who had his eyes covered had to guess correctly who had struck him.⁴³

LEAP-FROG, LEAP LANDLE. Leap-frog was a widespread game in which one player stooped down with his hands upon his knees and others leap over him, with every one of them stooping in turn. The game continued in succession of stooping and leaping.⁴⁴

In the literature of the seventeenth century, the term leap-frog seems to have meant ignoring obstacles (sometimes dangerous) in the way of a desired object. For example, Ben Jonson wrote in Bartolomew Fair, "who would have mark'd such a leap-frogge chance now?"⁴⁵ Dekker uses the term in similiar sense in The Honest Whore II.

. . . this night I had plaid the part
of a true sone in these daies, undone
my Father-in-law, with him wud I ha

⁴² Godfrey, Home Life Under the Stuarts, pp. 19-20.

⁴³ Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 308 and Hole, English Sports and Pastimes, pp. 35-36.

⁴⁴ Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 302 and Gomme, The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland, 1:327.

⁴⁵ Jonson, Works, 6:19.

run at leape-frogge, and come over his
gold, tho I had broke his necke for 't.⁴⁶

MORE SACKS TO THE MILL. This was more of a tussle
than a game which could be played either indoors or out-
side. A group of children threw an unfortunate playmate
on the floor, and then piled on top of him, crying "More
bags to the mill!"⁴⁷

PENNY-PRICKE. This seventeenth-century game was
reproved in 1616, by a critic who considered it a futile
pastime.

Their idle hours (I meane all
houres beside
Their hours to eatt, to drinke,
drab, sleepe, and ride)
They spend at shove-board, or at
penny-pricke.

The game consisted of throwing at pence, which were
located on pieces of stick called holes, with a piece
of iron.⁴⁸

PRISON BASE, PRISONERS BASE, PRISONERS BARS, THE BASE
were all terms for the same game. The members of one group
tried to make prisoners of those of the other group by
confining them to a specific area. The "prisoners" could

⁴⁶The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker, ed. Fredson
Bowers, 4 vols. (Cambridge: The University Press, 1953),
2:206-207.

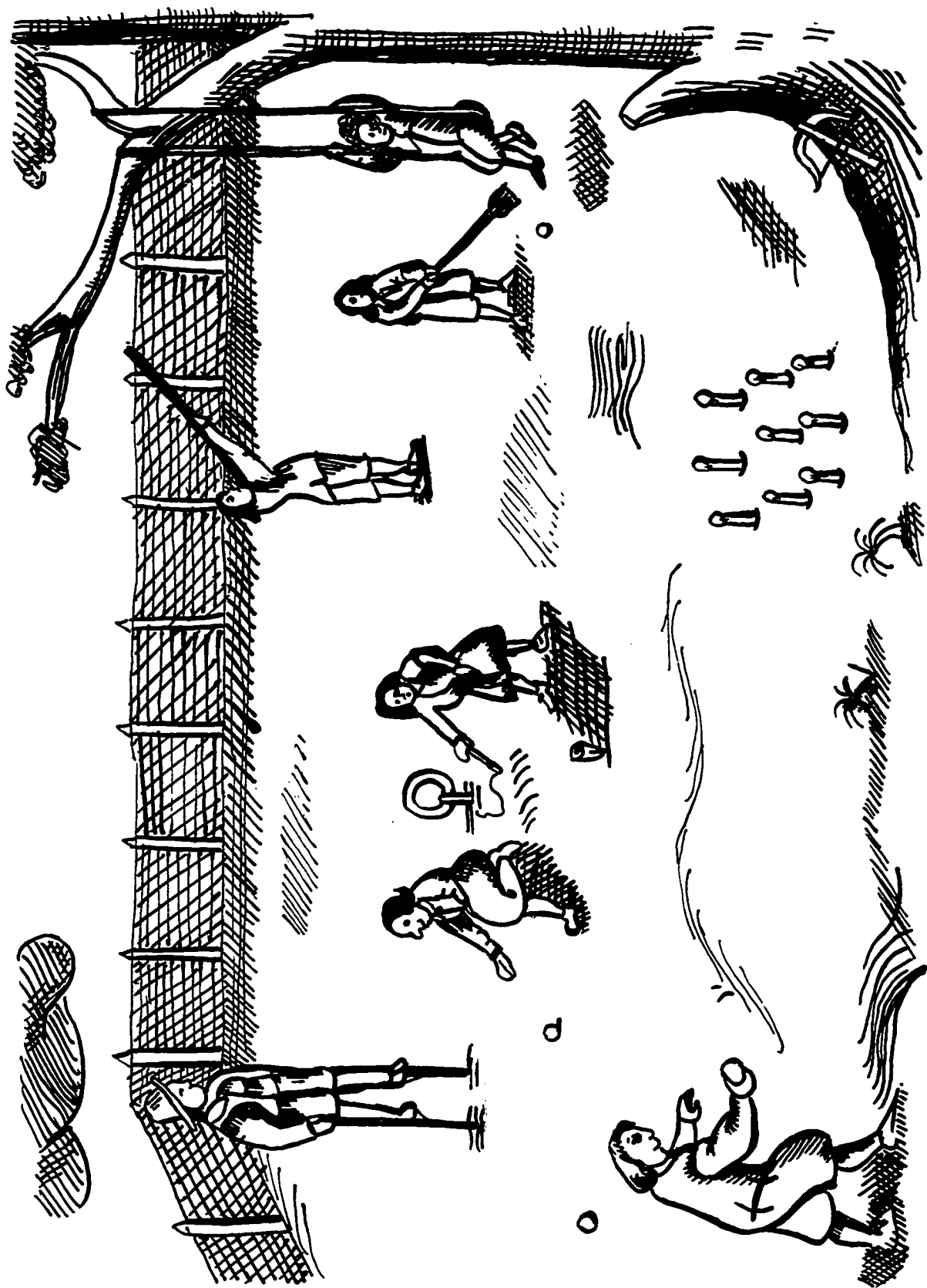
⁴⁷Brewster, "Games and Sports in Shakespeare," p. 38.

⁴⁸Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of
England, p. 312.

Plate VIII.*

CHILDREN'S PASTIMES

*
Lilly Stone, English Sports and Recreations, n. p.



be released from their captivity if one of their comrades could approach near enough to touch them. This game had several different versions.⁴⁹

PUSHPIN, BLOWPOINT. In this game one player tried to push (or blow) his pin so that it would lie across that of his opponent.⁵⁰

SHOEING THE WILD MARE. The Wild Mare was the youth who was allowed a certain start, and who was pursued by his companions with the object of catching him.⁵¹

SHADOW-GAME. A number of children's games reflect the history of the times. This game is one example. The Puritan pastime consisted of using the first finger and thumb muffled in a handkerchief and reflected by candlelight on a wall. As the thumb and forefinger bobbed to each other the child chanted:

Father, father I've come to confess.
What penan' do?
To kiss me, to kiss me, to kiss me!

As the child said the last lines the thumb and forefinger were snapped together.⁵²

⁴⁹Brewster, "Games and Sports in Shakespeare," p. 41.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 42.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 43.

⁵²Godfrey, Home Life Under the Stuarts, pp. 19-20.

SPAN-COUNTER, HIT OR SPAN, BOSS AND SPAN, BOSS OUT.

This was a marble game which involved two or more players. In the absence of marbles the children used nuts, round stones or any small object which rolled smoothly. One bowled his marble to any distance; the first marble served as a target for the antagonist to bowl at. The second player must either hit the marble first bowled, or set his own near enough to span the space between and have both marbles touching. If the antagonist does not succeed in either case, his marble then became the target for the first player, and so alternately until the game was won.⁵³

The game was mentioned in Shakespeare's play Henry VI, Part II, ". . . Henry the Fifth, in whose time the boys went to span-counter for French crowns." This passage indicates that Jacobean children gambled as freely at their own games as their parents did at theirs.⁵⁴

TOPS, TOP AND SCOURGE, PEG-IN-THE-RING. One of the most popular children's toys in Tudor and Stuart England was the top or gig as it was also termed. The numerous references in the literature of the period attest to this

⁵³Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 304.

⁵⁴Shakespeare, Complete Works, 2:377. Act IV, Scene ii.

fact. The tops children played with in Stuart England were whip-tops. These tops were shaped like an inverted cone, with a point at its apex upon which it was spun, usually by unwinding a string. The peg-top is a more modern invention, with a pear-shaped body and metal tip.⁵⁵

This innocent toy was recommended to youth by Northbrooke in his Treatise (1579): "Playe with the toppe, and flee Diceplaying."⁵⁶ The top was also approved by the Stuart sovereigns. A large top was kept in every parish to be whipped in frosty weather, so the peasants could be kept warm by exercise and out of mischief, while they could not work.⁵⁷

Top and Scourge was the simple actions of whipping a top to make it spin. This game was connected with the Lenten season.⁵⁸ Peg-in-the-Ring was a slightly more complicated top game in which the goal was to keep the top from going out of a circle.⁵⁹

⁵⁵Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, pp. 304-305.

⁵⁶Northbrooke, A Treatise, p. 86.

⁵⁷Staunton, The Complete Illustrated Shakespeare, 2:277.

⁵⁸Lilly Stone, English Sports and Recreations, p. 9.

⁵⁹Gomme, The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland, 2:38.

WILD MARE was the expression applied to the game of Seesaw or Titter-Totter. It consisted of laying one piece of timber across another, so that they were equi-oised; and either end being occupied by a boy or a girl, they raised or lowered themselves in turn.⁶⁰

In brief, it is clear that the seventeenth century marked a profound change in attitudes towards children and their games. The Jacobean and Caroline aristocratic Stuarts viewed children as miniature adults. Parental discipline was designed to insure that a child's recreations would not interfere with his education and duty to increase the family's honors or fortunes. This view of the child as chattel reflected the social, political and economic insecurities of early Stuart society.

The liberals and educational reformers of the mid-seventeenth century helped formulate a more sensitive attitude towards children. Many Stuart parents were concerned with the moral aspects of their children's gaming. The child's unique characteristics were being recognized although children were still introduced into the adult world at a tender age. This new interest in children was manifested in works like John Locke's

⁶⁰Brewster, "Games and Sports in Shakespeare," p. 43 and Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 243.

Some Thoughts Concerning Education. Locke espoused a progressive educational system which was designed to nurture responsible adults. As Stuart society and economy stabilized in the latter half of the seventeenth century, enterprising entrepreneurs capitalized on the new concern for children by commercializing their gaming implements. Thus, a child who recreated in the Augustan age was the beneficiary of a more secure, tolerant and relaxed society.

Finally, modern researchers, Roberts and Sutton-Smith (1962), have found a relationship between childrearing practices and the existence of certain types of games. They conclude that cultures which emphasize obedience training have a preponderance of games of strategy. When responsibility training was stressed, games of chance became more prevalent. Stress on achievement produces an increase in the popularity of games of physical skills. This theory applies when one examines the games played in Stuart England. The games of strategy and competitive skill like Chess, Bowls and Billiards were played more frequently in the reigns of the early Stuarts when obedience training was stressed. Games of chance which involved card-playing and dicing were more popular under the later Stuarts when responsibility training came into vogue.⁶¹

⁶¹Lieberman, *Playfulness: Its Relationship to Imagination and Creativity*, p. 9.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

The task of understanding the social life and customs of a nation is facilitated by a knowledge of its games and gaming patterns. An examination of upper-class games and gamblers in Stuart England reveals a number of important aspects of Stuart culture. The way the Stuart aristocracy and gentry recreated also provides a clue to their motivation, personalities and character.

The most important gambler of the era was the monarch. The crown's influence on the games and gaming in Stuart England was considerable. The monarch's own gaming tendencies usually determined which games were fashionable. The morals of the court and the tastes of the king were also shaped by the extent and intensity of the gaming at court. Virtually every aspect of a monarch's life drew attention and influenced public opinion. It is conceivable, for instance, that Queen Anne's obsession with gaming accounted for the increase in the number of female gamblers. When royalty recreated in public it fed the desire of the populace for a glimpse of the court, and it satisfied the personal need

of the Sovereigns for recreation. Moreover, it is possible that extensive gaming was encouraged at the court to drain the purses and energies of a restless aristocracy, impress foreign ambassadors and enhance the prestige of the court.

The crown's legal control of many aspects of gaming was important. The issuing of charters or licenses for bowling alleys or ordinaries was a source of revenue and a chance for the crown to meet debt obligations. The protection of the domestic manufacture of playing cards and the subsequent duties imposed on the decks of cards illustrate the paternalistic and economic responsibilities of the monarch. One wonders if certain games or pastimes like lotteries and card playing were purposely encouraged to generate revenue.

The regulation of gaming also reaffirmed the crown's prerogative to establish and confirm traditions. In early seventeenth-century England, the control of leisure and gaming was a serious matter and generated considerable debate. The early Stuart monarchs issued The Book of Sports to define the gaming rights of their subjects and to curb the Puritan zealots who also wanted to clarify the limits of recreating. James I and Charles I viewed The Book of Sports as a piece of political propaganda in which the king exercised his graciousness and cemented the bonds of personal affection and loyalty with his subjects. The monarch

wanted to create good relations with the aristocracy and gentry by reaffirming their rights to traditional games like Bowls.

The collision of the Puritans and crown over the issue of gaming reflected in part the religious and political turmoil which culminated in the Civil Wars. Leisure represented an area where social distinctions were less significant since all segments of Stuart society engaged in gaming. To the Puritans the prospect of an increasingly leisured society like that which the aristocracy and gentry seemed to exhibit was a matter of disquiet rather than gratification. Gaming was an invitation to idleness and dissipation. The Puritans and later other critics of gaming like John Locke hoped that popular recreations would be improved with superior counter-attractions like the pursuit of the Godly life or an education attuned to social responsibility.

Because of their concern for perfection the Puritans heaped censure upon the immoderate lifestyle of the elite. Sunday gaming, excessive drinking and swearing and gaming locales like alehouses and taverns were unsuccessfully regulated during the Commonwealth. The regularity with which laws were reissued and violated illustrated how difficult it was for the Puritans or the crown to regulate popular pastimes like gaming. Custom and tradition not legal regulations usually modify the recreations of a nation.

After the crown was restored in 1660, royal regulation of gaming resumed. With the economic and political primacy of the upper class affirmed, the later Stuarts sovereigns were able to exert a measure of control over gaming pastimes like the lotteries. The essentially conservative elite feared the rapid growth of gaming would outstrip existing social controls. As old patterns of recreating were altered with new games (lotteries, Roulette) and new gaming locales (spas, clubs), the crown issued proclamations like the restriction on bets at the race-tracks to insure that gaming and the subsequent gambling mania would not expand to uncontrollable proportions.

The differences in the gaming habits between the upper and lower classes were not confirmed with legal restrictions only, but also reinforced with traditional and customary practices. Partitions in ordinaries to separate aristocrats and gentry from the rabble and exclusive gaming rooms in clubs and at spas are two examples of how the Stuart upper class modified their gaming to enhance their superior social status. This authority structure was temporarily inverted in the time-honored ceremonies at Twelfth Night, the Cotswald games, or Church-Ales. The ruling class may have recognized the stabilizing effect of intervals of license and the utility of certain rites such as the Lord of Misrule during Twelfth Night in dissipating popular frustrations and thus rein-

forcing the authority of the oligarchy. These occasions were also opportunities for the lower classes to witness royal and noble tastes in gaming matters. As the Stuart century progressed the upper class wanted to be the leader in the new amenities and forms of gaming and to ensure by their presence the display and projection of approved standards of leisure conduct to their inferiors.

Gaming practices were amended throughout the Stuart era. One of the obvious developments in the seventeenth century was the increase in gaming and the expansion of gambling among the elite. The growth of gaming can be attributed to a number of conditions in Stuart society.

For the elite gaming was a tradition fostered at an early age, and it reflected the elements of upper-class society. The ideals of generosity, conspicuous display and rank and status (especially with expensive gaming pieces) was manifested in the doctrine of liberality. In the etiquette of noble gaming, a nobleman not only counted gaming implements as a part of the furnishing of his private home, but he also opened his home and gaming equipment to any worthy gentleman. A good host of the period had the gaming implements, a knowledge of the games, enough money to stake on his gaming and the ability to pay any debts promptly. This particular form of social recognition was especially important in the Stuart era when the elite was in a state of flux as its composition changed due to

economic and political situations.

The expansion of gambling and gaming after the Restoration was also due in part to the failure of the Puritan experience and religious doctrine of providences. This doctrine was a conscientious attempt to impose order on the apparent randomness of the human fortunes by asserting that, in the long run, virtue was rewarded and vices like excessive gambling and gaming, did not go unpunished. Late-Stuart gamblers recognized that a man's material wealth did not necessarily correspond to a man's moral behavior.¹

The latter half of the Stuart era was marked by rising political, economic and social expectations. The decline in religion as the traditional authority during the reigns of the later Stuarts corresponded with an increasing number of Englishmen who questioned the rightness of arrangements as they were and the duty of submission and obedience.² The political and economic instability generated by the Civil Wars produced a more reckless Restoration aristocracy. Knowing that one's wealth could be confiscated or one's life destroyed in another civil war probably generated a live-for-today attitude in which one sought to satisfy

¹Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p. 89 and p. 107.

²Laslett, The World We Have Lost: England Before the Industrial Age, p. 185.

instantaneously one's desire for wealth or recreation. The questioning of the status quo was also manifested in the assertion of the individual, limited religious toleration, and the end of the Divine Right monarchy with the Glorious Revolution of 1688. The elite under William and Mary, and Anne were more willing to gamble and accept risks in the marketplace and on their private estates; and this inclination may have influenced their willingness to gamble while gaming.

Stuart gamblers exhibited a personal recklessness whose cause was more psychological than social.³ The popularity of gambling while gaming may have reflected the fatalistic hopelessness of those who saw no alternatives but to drown their sorrows.⁴ When people could expect to live for so short a time, how must a man have felt when he realized that in Stuart society the fortunes of men seemed to bear practically no relation to their merits and efforts?⁵ The prospect that a lucky person could better himself despite the inequalities of the social system was manifested in the increase in gambling while gaming.⁶ In seeking to

³Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641, p. 582.

⁴Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p. 20.

⁵Laslett, The World We Have Lost: England Before the Industrial Age, p. 4 and Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p. 111.

⁶Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p. 21.

explain what it was that gave the seventeenth century its relative cohesion and conservatism Lawrence Stone has identified the development of the doctrine of individualism as a key factor. The tendency towards the assertion of the individual is represented in the development of the professional gamester in Stuart England.

The professional gamester was the beneficiary of a general relaxation of the formality of Stuart society. The decline of family honor, an emphasis on the uniqueness of each person and the freedom to choose one's own livelihood resulted in less commitment to the family's good name or fortunes. The acceptance of risk-taking, cheating and larger wagers was indicative of this informality which supported the aristocratic rake.

The gambling stakes grew higher as professional gamesters struggled to obtain a sufficient income from their gaming prowess. Aristocrats and members of the gentry tried to avoid being cheated of both their goods and reputations by these professional gamesters. The increase in violence and dueling is indicative of the pressure these noblemen endured with the decline of their military functions as an outlet for aggression. It is interesting to speculate whether the later Stuart monarchs unconsciously encouraged the professional gamesters who kept the purses of the elite drained and their hostilities channeled away from the monarchy.

Professional gamesters knew that games of chance are more conducive to effective cheating, and they may have encouraged their promotion. Professional gamesters knew that when luck was involved the chance of their cheating methods being detected was less. Their victim was probably better able to reconcile his loss if he knew that the game had not required an agility or competitive skill he did not possess. Stuart gamesters were also interested in the semblance of equality that games of chance provided. Professional gamesters took advantage of the growth and variety of gaming locales in the seventeenth century. These new gaming locales corresponded to the increasing urbanization of Stuart England. The expansion of the urban population, especially in London, and increased leisure time reinforced the opportunities for gaming. Stuart gamesters now had more places to spend their money.

The development of gaming facilities at spas, clubs, and racetracks illustrates how well some men in trade seized new market opportunities and developed the role of entrepreneurs. The upper-class demand for luxury goods, such as gaming implements, to enhance their prestige corresponded with the increased availability and more forceful marketing of cheap consumer goods. In the larger urbanized areas this was a stimulus to the economy. The commercialization of gaming with the capitalistic goal

of profitability was especially evident in the area of children's games.

Finally, an examination of the games themselves reveals the stability and universality of man's games. Games are usually regarded as insignificant and their rules change little.⁷ The fact that so many ancient games like Chess and Knucklebones were still played in the same basic form in Stuart England illustrates this point. The degree of cultural contact is also documented when one examines the number of card games imported from France or pastimes like The Bottle Game which originated in China.

The history of the times is also reflected in the games the Stuarts played. Chess, for example, was popular in the early decades of the Stuart monarchs. This game which was based on the pyramid structure of the military and monarchy declined in popularity as the power of the Stuart sovereigns waned. The power of the monarchy had been checked by a more assertive aristocracy.

From Chess for adults to Hocus Pocus for children, games mirror political realities, social cleavages, and religious tensions. An examination of games can stimulate new insights into their historical setting and cultural context.

⁷Caillois, Man, Play, and Games, p. 81.

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APPENDIX I*

JAMES I'S BOOK OF SPORTS

The King's Majesty's Declaration
to his Subjects, Concerning
lawful Sports to be used.

London: Printed by Bonham Norton and John Bill,
Deputy Printers for the King's most Excellent Majesty.

M.DC.XVIII.

By the King.

Whereas upon Our return, the last year out of Scotland, We did publish Our Pleasure touching the recreations of Our people in those parts, under Our hand: for some causes Us thereunto moving, We have thought good to command these Our Directions, then given in Lancashire, with a few words thereunto added and most appliable to these parts of Our Realms, to be published to all Our subjects.

Whereas We did justly, in Our progress through Lancashire, rebuke some Puritans and precise people, and took order that the like unlawful carriage should not be used by any of them hereafter, in the prohibiting and unlawful punishing of Our good people for using their lawful recreations and honest exercises upon Sundays and other Holy Days, after the afternoon Sermon or Service; We now find, that two sorts of people wherewith that country [county] is much infested (We mean Papists and Puritans) have maliciously traduced and caluminated those Our just and honourable proceedings. And therefore lest Our reputation might, upon the one side, though innocently, have some aspersion laid upon it; and that, upon the other part, Our good people in the country be misled by the mistaking and misinterpretation of Our meaning: We have therefore thought

* Social England Illustrated: A Collection of XVIIth Century Tracts, pp. 310-316.

good hereby to clear and make Our Pleasure to be manifested to all Our good people in those parts.

It is true, that at Our first entry to this Crown and Kingdom, We were informed, and that too truly, that Our County of Lancashire abounded more in Popish Recusants than any county in England; and thus hath still continued since, to our great regret, with little amendment, save that now, of late, in our last riding through Our said County, We find, both by the report of the Judges, and of the Bishops of that diocese, that there is some amendment now daily beginning, which is no small contentment to Us.

The report of this growing amendment amongst them, made Us the more sorry, when, with Our own ears, We heard the general compliant of Our people, that they were barred from all lawful recreation and exercise upon the Sunday's afternoon, after ending of all Divine Service. Which cannot but produce two evils. The one, the hindering of the conversion of many whom their priests will take occasion hereby to vex; persuading them that "no honest mirth or recreation is lawful or tolerable in Our Religion!" which cannot but breed a great discontentment in Our people's hearts; especially of such as are, peradventure, upon the point of turning. The other inconvenience is, that this prohibition barreth the common and meaner sort of people from using such exercise as may make their bodies more able for war, when We, or Our Successors shall have occasion to use them: and in place thereof sets up filthy tiplings and drunkenness, and breeds a number of idle and discontented speeches in their alehouses. For when shall the common people have leave to exercise, if not upon the Sundays and Holy Days? seeing they must apply their labour, and win their living in all working days!

Our express pleasure therefore is, That the Laws of Our Kingdom and Canons of Our Church be as well observed in that County, as in all other places of this Our Kingdom. And, on the other part, that no lawful recreation shall be barred to our good people, which shall not tend to the breach of Our aforesaid laws, and Canons of Our Church.

Which to express more particularly,

Our Pleasure is, That the Bishop and all other inferior Churchmen [Clergy], and Churchwardens shall, for their parts, be careful and diligent, both to instruct the ignorant, and convince and reform them that are misled in religion, presenting [i.e., reporting for punishment] them that will not conform themselves, but obstinately stand out to Our Judges and Justices: whom, We likewise command to put the law in due execution against them.

Our Pleasure likewise is, That the Bishop of that diocese take the like strait order with all the Puritans and Precisians within the same: either constraining them to conform themselves, or to leave the country, according to the Laws of Our Kingdom and Canons of Our Church. And so to strike equally on both hands against the Contemners of Our Authority, and Adversaires of Our Church.

And as for Our good people's lawful recreation; Our Pleasure likewise is, That after the end of Divine Service, Our good people be not disturbed, letted, or discouraged from any lawful recreation, such as Dancing (either man or women), Archery for men, Leaping, Vaulting, or any other such harmless recreations; nor from having of May Games, Witsun Ales, and Morris Dances; and the setting up of May Poles, and other sports therewith used: so as the same be had in due and convenient time, without impediment or neglect of Divine Service. And, That women shall have leave to carry rushes to the church for the decorating [decorating] of it, according to their old custom.

But withal, We do here account still as prohibited, all unlawful games, to be used upon Sundays only; as Bear and Bull baitings, Interludes: and, at all times, in the meaner sort of people by Law prohibited, Bowling.

And, likewise, We bar from this benefit and liberty, all such known Recusants, either men or women, as will abstain from coming to Church or Divine Service: being, therefore, unworthy of any lawful recreation after the said Service, that will not first come to the Church, and serve GOD.

Prohibiting, in like sort, the said recreation to any that, though conforme [conformable] in Religion, are not present in the Church, at the Service of GOD, before their going to the said recreations.

Our pleasure likewise is, That they to whom it be- longth in Office, shall present, and sharply punish to all such, as in abuse of this Our liberty, will use these exercises before the ends of Divine Services for that day.

And We, likewise, straitly command, That every person shall resort to his own Parish Church to hear Divine Service; and each Parish, by itself, to use the said recreation after Divine Service. Prohibiting likewise, Any offensive weapons to be carried or used in the said times of recreation.

And Our Pleasure is, That this Our Declaration shall be published by order from the Bishop of the diocese, through all the Parish Churches; and that both Our Judges of Our Circuit, and Our Justices of Our Peace be informed thereof.

Given at Our Manor of Greenwich, the four and twentieth day of May 1618 in the sixteenth year of Our reign of England, France, and Ireland; and of Scotland, the one and fiftieth.

GOD save the King!

CHARLES I'S PREFACE TO THE BOOK OF SPORTS

The King's Majesty's Declaration
to his Subjects, Concerning
lawful Sports to be used.

Imprinted at London by Robert Barker,
Printer to the King's most excellent Majesty:
and by the Assigns of John Bill

M.DC.XXXIII.

Our dear Father, of blessed memory, in his return from Scotland, coming through Lancashire found that his subjects were debarred from lawful recreations upon Sundays, after Evening Prayers ended, and upon Holy Days: and he prudently considered, that if these times were taken from them, the meaner sort, who labour hard all the week, should have no recreations at all to refresh their spirits.

And, after his return, he further saw that his loyal subjects in all other parts of his kingdom did suffer in the same kind, though perhaps not in the same degree. And did therefore, in his Princely wisdom, publish a Declaration to all his loving Subjects concerning the lawful Sports to be used at such times: which was printed and published, by his royal commandment, in the year 1618, in the tenour which hereafter followeth.

Now, out of a like pious care for the service of GOD, and for supressing of any humours that oppose Truth, and for the ease, comfort, and recreation of our well deserving people: We do ratify and publish this Our blessed father's Declaration. The rather because, of late, in some counties of Our kingdom, We find that, under pretence of taking away abuses, there hath been a general Forbidding, not only of ordinary meetings, but of the Feasts of the Dedication of the Churches, commonly called Wakes.

Now, Our express Will and Pleasure is, that these Feasts, with others, shall be observed; and that Our Justices of the Peace, in their several divisions, shall look to it, both, that all disorders, there, may be prevented or punished; and that all neighbourhood and free-

dom, with manlike and lawful exercises be used.

And We further Command Our Justices of Assize, in their several circuits, to see that no man do trouble or molest any of Our loyal or dutiful people in or for their lawful recreations; having first done their duty to GOD, and continuing in obedience to Us and Our Laws. And of this, We command all Our Judges, Justices of the Peace, as well within Liberties as without, Mayors, Bailiffs, Constables, and other Officers to take notice of; and to see observed, as they tender Our displeasure. And We further will, that publication of this Our Command be made, by order from the Bishops, through all the Parish Churches of their several diocese respectively.

Given at Our Palace of Westminster, the 18th day of October 1633, in the ninth year of Our reign. GOD save the King!

APPENDIX II*

LEGISLATION AND EVENTS AFFECTING
PLAYING CARDS IN STUART ENGLAND

1615. July 20th. Letters Patent granted by James I to Sir Richard Coningsby for the 'imposition of five shillings upon every grosse of Playing Cards that shall be Imported into this Kingdom' and an office created of 'Inspector of all Playing Cards imported.' This was an easy means of paying off a debt due from King James I to Sir Coningsby.
1616. The card-makers remonstrate against Sir Richard Coningsby's patent.
1623. October 22nd. The card-makers in London formed themselves into a company titled: 'The Master, Wardens and Commonalty of the Mistery of the Makers of Playing Cards of the City of London.' The worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards was incorporated by Charter of the 4th. Charles I was empowered to seize foreign cards, or 'cards defectively made or unsealed,' on condition that the company thus incorporated should pay two shillings on every gross of packs 'made and sealed as thereafter appointed' and 11.-- to the officer appointed to receive the same.
1631. The House of Commons complained of the duty on cards as 'arbitrary and illegal, and being levied without the consent of Parliament.'
1638. Proclamation 14th, Charles I, 18th June. No one to 'seal card' but his Majesty's officer, and no cards to be imported. If cards were imported they were to be seized to be 'put into English Binders.'

* Hargrave, A History of Playing Cards and a Bibliography of Cards and Gaming, pp. 170, and 180-182.

1643. July 11th. Orders were issued to seize all imported cards and proceed against the importers.
1684. November 7th. A petition of the Company of Card-makers stating that many poor persons were deprived of a way of making their living moves Charles II to order all foreign playing cards imported to be 'Seized and condemned.' The Card-makers Company also established an office to seal all playing cards of English manufacture and to regulate the price at which they could be sold.
1710. 9th Queen Anne, c. 23, XXXIX. That from and after 11th June 1711, for a period of 32 years, 'all playing cards made in or imported into Great Britain' shall pay a duty of 6d per pack. Cards not to be removed from the Card-maker's premises until the 'seal upon the paper and thread enclosing every pack of cards was approved by the Commissioners appointed to receive the 'vellum parchment and paper duties.'
1711. 10th Queen Anne, c. 19, CLX-CLXII. There was a long series of protests by card-makers, paper-makers, and importers, against the duty. The 'Poor Card-Makers' succeeded in having the duty reduced. Cards that were made and finished before 12th June 1711, were to be sealed for $\frac{1}{2}$ d per pack if taken to the Stamp Office for the Vellum, Parchment and Paper Duties. But from and after August 12th, 1712, no cards were to be put on sale, or used for play in any gaming-house unless the wrapper was 'sealed and stamped or marked' and one of the cards 'stamped or marked on the spotted or printed side.'