

The Explanation of the Frontispiece.

Rilliards from Spate at first deriv'd its name,
Both an ingenious, and a cleanly Game.
One Gamester leads (the Table green as grass)
And each like Warriors strive to gain the Pass-
But in the contest, e're the Pass be won,
Hazzards are mix'd into which they run.
Thus whilst we play on this Terrestrial Stage,
Nothing but Hazzard doth attend each age.

Next here are Hazzards play'd another way,
By Box and Dice; 'tis Hazzard is the Play.
The Bully-Rock with mungy fist, and Pox,
Justis some out, and then takes up the Box.
He throws the Main, and cries, who comes at Seven ?
Thus with a dry fist nicks it with Eleven.
If out, he raps out Oaths I dare not tell,
Hot, piping out, and newly come from Hell.
Old-Nick o're-bearing, by a Palming-trick
Secures the Gamester ; thus the Nickers nickt.

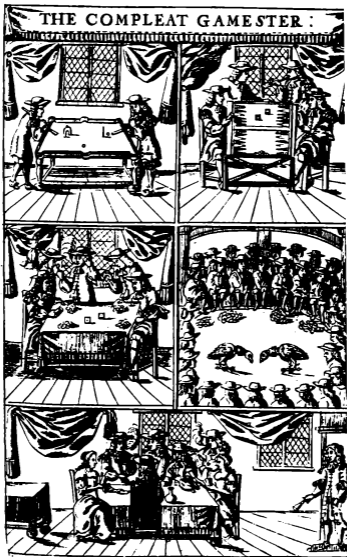
Now t' Irish, or Back-Gammoners we come,
Who with their money, with their men safe home ;
But as in war, so in this subtle Play,
The stragling men are ta'ne up by the way.
By entring then, one reinforceth more,
It may be to be lost, as those before.
By Topping, Knapping; and foul play some win ;
But the're are losers, who so gain by sin.

After these three the Cock-pit claims a name ;
A sport gentle, and call'd a Royal Game.
Now see the Gallants crowd about the Pit,
And most are flockt with Mony more than wit ;
Else sure they would not, with so great a stir,
Lay ten to one on a Cocks faithless Spur.

Lastly, observe the women with what grace
They sit, and look their Partners in the face.
Who from their eyes shoot Cupids fiery Darts ;
Thus make them lose at once their Game and Hearts.
Their white soft hands, (when e're the Cards they cut)
Make the men wish to change the Game to Putt.
The women know their thoughts, then cry'd, Enough,
Lets leave off Whist, and go to Putt, or Ruff.

Ladies don't trust your servants in that hand,
Who can't their own (to their great grief) command.
For this I will assure you, if you do,
In time you'l lose your Ruff and Honour too.

THE COMPLEAT GAMESTER :



THE COMPLEAT
Gamester :
O R,
INSTRUCTIONS

How to play at
BILLIARDS, TRUCKS, BOWLS,
and CHESS.

Together with all manner of usual and
most Gentile Games either on

CARDS or DICE.

To which is added,
The ARTS and MYSTERIES

O F
RIDING, RACING, ARCHERY,
and COCK-FIGHTING.

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CHAP. I.

Of BILLIARDS.

THe Gentile, cleanly and most ingenious Game at Billiards had its first original from *Italy*, and for the excellency of the Recreation is much approved of and plaid by most Nations in *Europe*, especially in *England* there being few Towns of note therein which hath not a publick Billiard-Table, neither are they wanting in many Noble and private Families in the Country, for the recreation of the mind and exercise of the body.

The form of a Billiard-Table is oblong, that is something longer than it is broad ; it is rail'd round, which rail or ledge ought to be a little swel'd or stuf with fine flax or cotton : the superficies of the Table must be covered with green-cloth, the finer and more freed from knots the better it is : the Board must be level'd as exactly as may be, so that a Ball may run true up-

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on any part of the Table without leaning to any side thereof ; but what by reason of ill-season'd boards which are subject to warp, or the floor on which it stands being uneven, or in time by the weight of the Table, and the Gamesters yielding and giving way, there are very few Billiard-Tables which are found true ; and therefore such which are exactly level'd are highly valuable by a good Player ; for at a false Table it is impossible for him to show the excellency of his Art and Skill, whereby Bunglers many times by knowing the windings and tricks of the Table have shamefully beaten a very good Gamester, who at a true Table would have given him three in five.

But to proceed in the description thereof ; at the four corners of the Table there are holes, and at each side exactly in the middle one, which are called Hazards, and have hanging at the bottoms nets to receive the Balls and keep them from falling to the ground when they are hazarded. I have seen at some Tables Wooden

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Boxes for the hazards, six of them as aforesaid, but they are nothing near so commendable as the former, because a Ball struck hard is more apt to fly out of them when struck in.

There is to the Table belonging an Ivory Port, which stands at one end of the Table, and an Ivory King at the other, two small Ivory Balls and two Sticks; where note if your Balls are not compleatly round you can never expect good proof in your play: your Sticks ought to be heavy, made of *Braile*, *Lignum vite* or some other weighty wood, which at the broad end must be tipt with Ivory; where note, if the heads happen to be loose, you will never strike a smart stroke, you will easily perceive that defect by the hollow deadness of your stroak and faint running of your Ball.

The Game is five by day light, or seven if odds be given, and three by Candle-light or more according to odds in houses that make a livelihood thereof; but in Gentlemens houses there is no such restriction; for the Game may justly admit of as many as the

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Gamesters please to make.

For the Lead you are to stand on the one side of the Table opposite to the King, with your Ball laid near the Cushion, and your Adversary on the other in like posture; and he that with his Stick makes his Ball come nearest the King leads first.

The Leader must have a care that at the first stroke his Ball touch not the end of the Table leading from the King to the Port, but after the first stroke he need not fear to do it, and let him so lead that he may either be in a possibility of passing the next stroke, or so cunningly lie that he may be in a very fair probability of hazarding his Adversaries Ball, that very stroak he plaid after him.

The first contest is who shall pass first, and in that strife there are frequent opportunities of hazarding one another; and it is very pleasant to observe what policies are used in hindering one another from the pass, as by turning the Port with a strong clever stroke; for if you turn it with your Stick it must be set right again; but

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indeed more properly he that doth it should lose one; sometimes it is done (when you see it is impossible to pass) by laying your Ball in the Port, or before your Adversaries, and then all he can do is to pass after you; if he hath past and you dare not adventure to pass after him, for fear he should in the interim touch the King and so win the end, you must wait upon him and watch all opportunities to hazard him, or King him; that is, when his Ball lyeth in such manner that when you strike his Ball may hit down the King, and then you win one.

Here note, that if you should King him, and your Ball fly over the Table, or else run into a hazard, that then you lose one notwithstanding.

The Player ought to have a curious eye, and very good judgment when he either intends to King his Adversary's Ball, or hazard, in taking or quartering out just so much of the Ball as will accomplish either; which observation must be noted in passing on your Adversary's Ball, or corner of the

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Port. Some I have observed so skilful at this Recreation, that if they have had less than a fifth part of a Ball they would rarely miss King or Hazard.

As this is a cleanly pastime, so there are Laws or Orders made against lolling slovingly Players, that by their forfeitures they may be reduced to regularity and decency; wherefore be careful you lay not your hand on the Table when you strike or let your sleeve drag upon it, if you do it is a loss; if you smoak and let the ashes of your Pipe fall on the Table, whereby oftentimes the Cloth is burned, it is a forfeiture, but that should not so much deter you from it as the hindrance piping is to your play.

When you strike a long stroke, hold your stick neatly between your two fore fingers and your thumb, then strike smartly, and by aiming rightly you may when you please either fetch back your Adversary's Ball when he lyeth fair for a pass, or many times when he lyeth behind the King,

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and you at the other end of the Table you may King him backward.

If you lie close you may use the small end of your stick, or the flat of the big end, raising up one end over your shoulder, which you shall think most convenient for your purpose.

Have a care of raking, for if it be not a forfeiture it is a fault hardly excusable, but if you touch your Ball twice it is a loss.

Beware when you jobb your Ball through the Port with the great end of your Stick that you throw it not down, if you do it is a loss, but do it so handsomly that at one stroke without turning the Port with your Stick you effect your purpose; it is good play to turn the Port with your Ball, and so hinder your Adversary from passing; neither is it amiss if you can to make your Adversary a Fornicator, that is having past your self a little way, and the others Ball being hardly through the Port you put him back again, and it may be quite out of pass.

It argueth policy to lay a long Ha-

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zard sometimes for your Antagonist, whereby he is often entrapp'd for rashly adventuring at that distance, thinking to strike your Ball into the Hazard, which lieth v ry near it, he frequently runs in himself by reason of that great distance.

There is great art in lying abscond, that is, to lie at bo-peep with your Adversary, either subtly to gain a pass or hazard.

Here note, if your Adversary hath not pass and lyeth up by the King, you may endeavour to pass again, which if you do, and touch the King, it is two, but if thrown down you lose: Some instead of a King use a string and a bell, and then you need not fear to have the end, if you can pass first; this is in my judgment bungling play, there being not that curious art of finely touching at a great distance a King that stands very ticklishly.

For your better understanding of the Game read the ensuing Orders. But there is no better way than practice to make you perfect therein.

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Orders to be observed by such who will play at Billiards.

1. **I**F the Leader touch the end of the Table with his Ball at the first stroke he loseth one.

2. If the Follower intend to hit his Adversaries Ball, or pats at one stroke he must string his Ball, that is, lay it even with the King, or he loseth one.

3. He that passeth through the Port hath the advantage of touching the King which is one if not thrown down.

4. He that passeth twice, his Adversary having not past at all, and toucheth the King without throwing him down wins two ends.

5. He that passeth not hath no other advantage than the Hazards.

6. He that is a Fornicator (that is, hath past through the back of the Port) he must pass twice through the fore part, or he cannot have the advantage of passing that end.

7. He that hits down the Port or King, or hazards his own Ball, or

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strikes either Ball over the Table loseth one.

8. He that hazards his Adversary's Ball, or makes it hit down the King winneth the end.

9. If four play, two against two, he that mistakes his stroke loseth one to that side he is of.

10. He that after both Balls plaid, removes the Port without consent, or strikes his Ball twice together, or that his Adversaries Ball touch his Stick-hand, Clothes, or playeth his Adversaries Balls, loseth one.

11. He that sets not one foot upon the ground when he strikes his Ball shall lose an end, or if he lay his hand or sleeve on the Cloth.

12. A stander by though he betts shall not instruct, direct or speak in the Game without consent, or being first asked; if after he is advertised hereof he offend in this nature, for every fault he shall instantly forfeit Two pence for the good of the Company, or not be suffer'd to stay in the Room.

13 He that plays a Ball, while the

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other runs, or takes up a Ball before it lie still loseth an end.

14. He that removes the Port with his Stick when he strikes his Ball, and thereby prevents his Adversaries Ball from passing loseth an end.

15. All controversies are to be decided by the Standers by, upon asking judgment. Here note, that whosoever breaks the King forfeits a shilling, for the Port ten shillings, and each Stick five shillings.

16. Five ends make a Game by Day-light, and three by Candle-light.

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The Orders in Verſe as I found them
fram'd for a very ancient Billiard-
Table.

1. **T**He Leading ball the upper end
(may'nt hit;
For if it doth it loſeth one by it.
2. The Follower with the King lie even
(ſhall
If he doth paſſ or hit the others ball;
Or elſe loſe one, the like if either lay
Their arm or hand on board when they
(do play.
3. That man wins one who with the o-
(thers ball
So ſtrikes the King that he doth make
(him fall.
4. If ſtriking at a hazard both run in,
The ball ſtruck at thereby an end ſhal win.
5. He loſeth one that down the Port doth
(ſting;
The like doth he that juſtles down the
(King.
6. He that in play the adverſe ball ſhall
(touch
With ſtick, hand, or cloaths forfeits
(juſt as much.

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7. *And he that twice hath past shall*
(touch the King,
The other not past at all shall two ends
(win.
8. *If both the balls over the Table fie,*
The striker of them loseth one thereby.
And if but one upon the board attend,
The striker still the loser of the end.
9. *One foot upon the ground must still be*
(set,
Or one end's lost if you do that forget :
And if you twice shall touch a ball e're
(He
Hath struck between an end for him is
(free.
10. *If any Stander by shall chance to bet,*
And will instruct, he then must pay the
(set.
11. *The Port or King being set, who*
(moves the same
With hand or stick shall lose that end
(or Game.
12. *He that can touch being past or strike*
(the other
Into the Hazard is allowed another.
13. *If any Stander by shall stop a ball,*
The Game being lost thereby he pays
(for .all.

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14. *If any putt be stricken back again,
His putt before shall be accounted vain.*
15. *He that breaks any thing with violence,
King, Port, or Stick is to make good
th'offence.*
16. *If any not the Game doth fully know
May ask another whether it be so,
Remember also when the Game you
win,
To set it up for fear of wrangling.*
17. *He that doth make his ball the King
light hit,
And holes th'other scores two ends for
it.*

There are several other Orders which only concern the house which I omit, as impertinent to the Rules of playing at Billiards.

Since Recreation is a thing lawful in it self if not abused, I cannot but commend this as the most gentle and innocent of any I know, if rightly used; there being none of those cheats to be plaid at this as at several other Games I shall hereafter mention. There is nothing here to be used but pure art; and therefore I shall only caution

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you to go to play, that you suffer not your self to be over-matcht, and do not when you meet with a better Gamester than your self condemn the Table, and do not swear as one did playing at *Nine-Pins*, this *L. N.* hath put false Pins upon me.

To conclude, I believe this Pastime is not so much used of late as formerly, by reason of those spunging Caterpillars which swarm where any Billiard-Tables are set up, who making that single room their Shop, Kitching and Bed-chamber; their Shop, for this is the place where 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 the Table, they make it their dormitory, and sleep under it; the Floor is their Feather-bed, the legs of the Table their Bed-posts, and the Table the Tester; they dream of nothing but *Hazards*, being never out of them, of *passing* and *repassing*, which may be fitly applied to their

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lewd lives, which makes them continually pass from one prison to another till their lives are ended ; and there is an end of the Game.