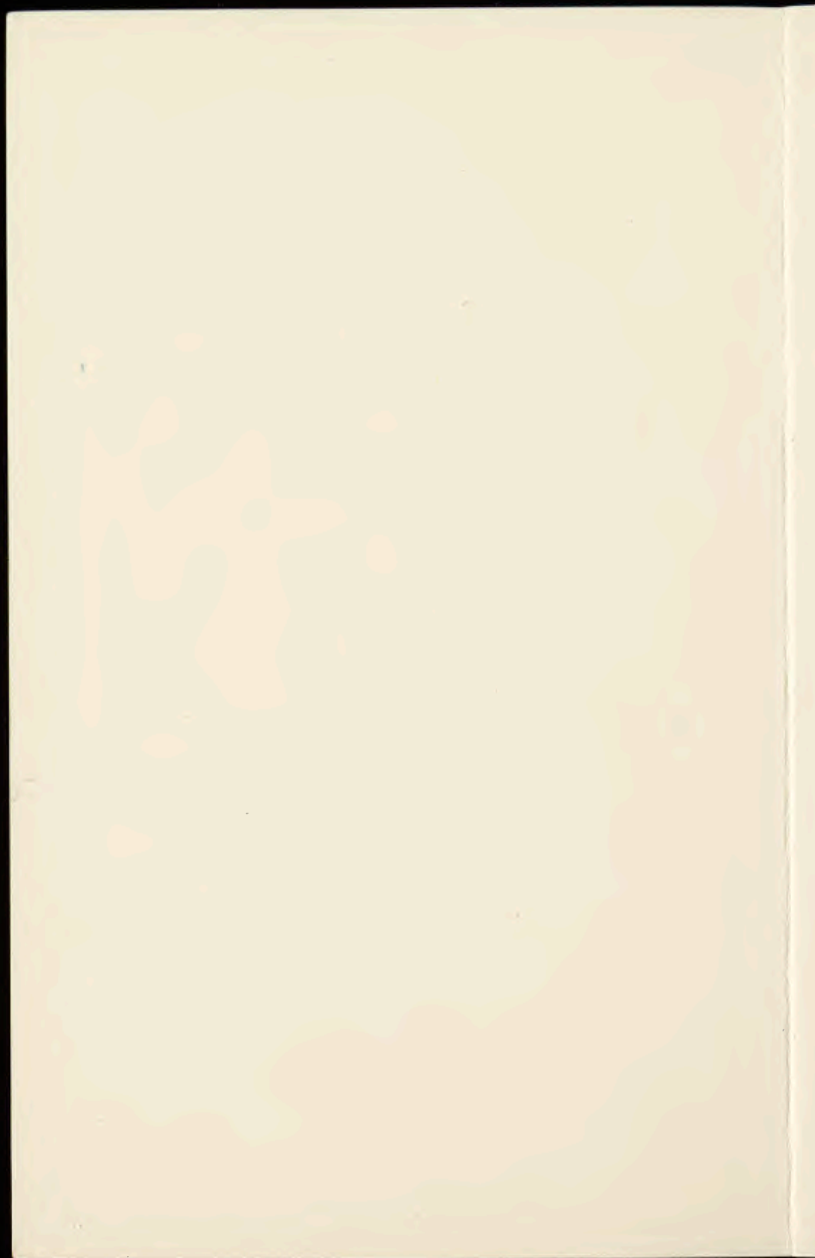


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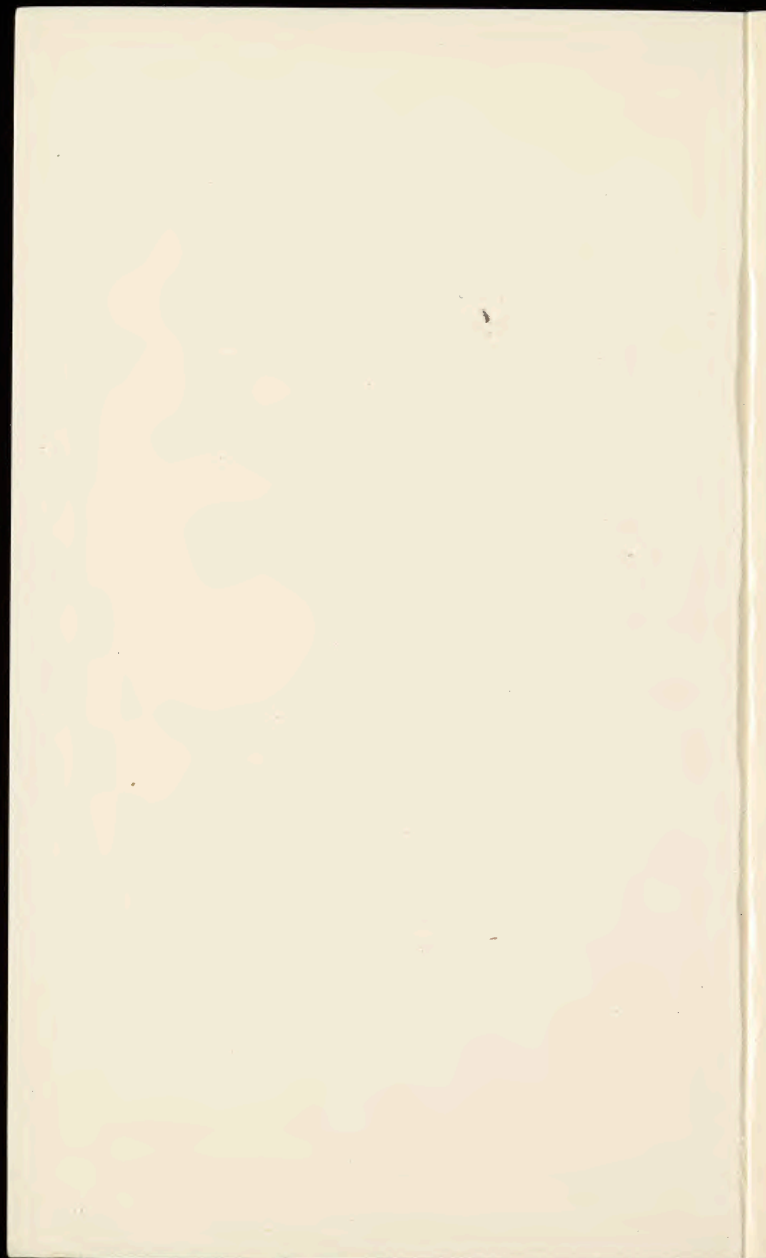
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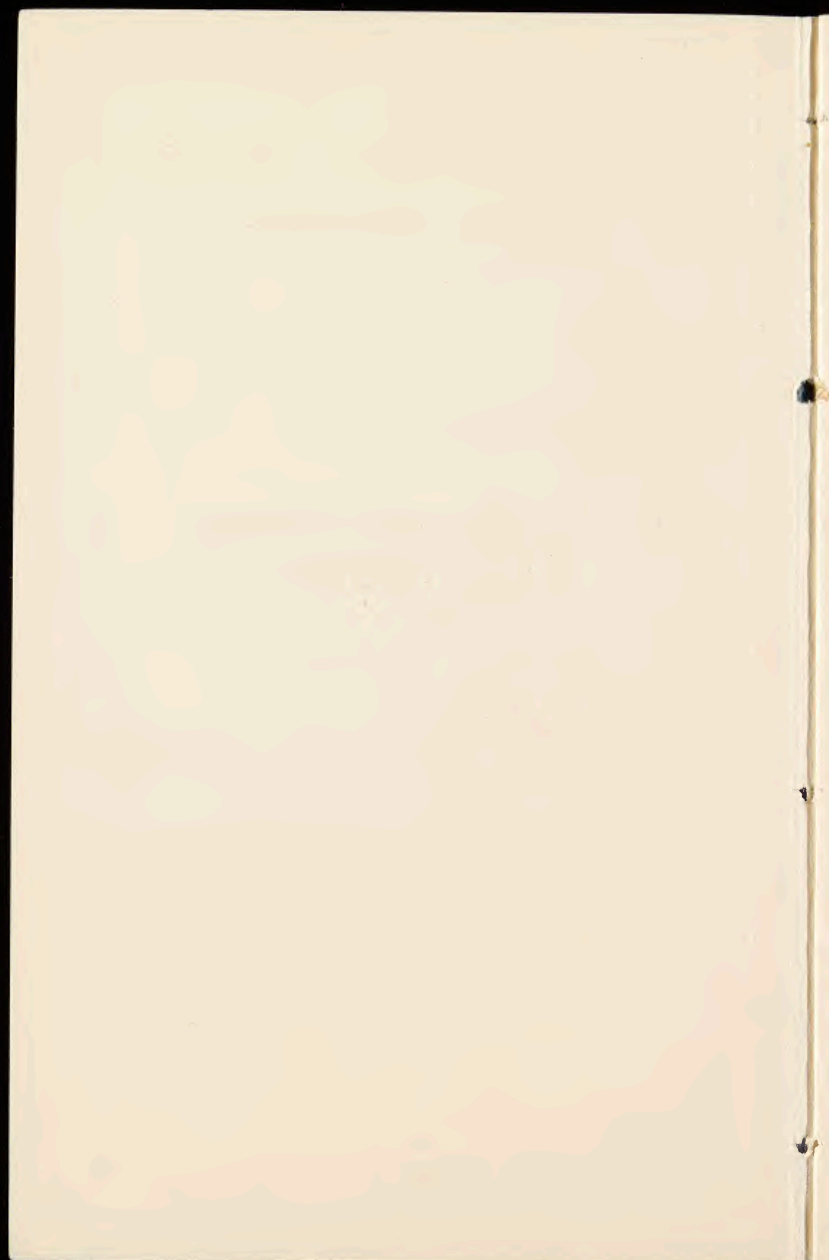
G. CRURIE STEUART







AN OLD CURLER'S LETTERS  
TO HIS NEPHEW



AN OLD CURLER'S LETTERS  
TO HIS NEPHEW

BY  
G. CRURIE STEUART

EDINBURGH  
MACNIVEN & WALLACE  
138 PRINCES STREET



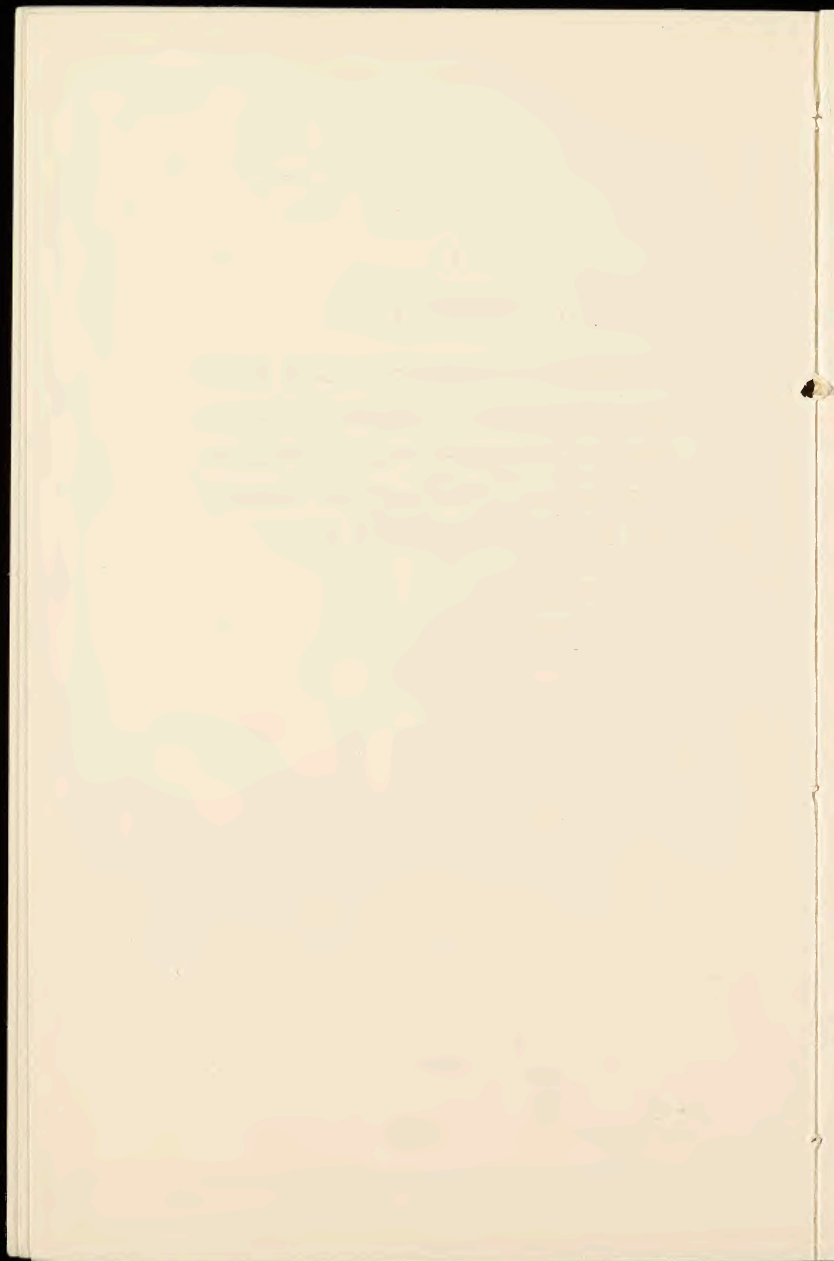
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## PREFACE

THE aim of this booklet is to assist the moderately skilful to overcome their more skilful rivals by enabling them to call to their aid the elementary principles of common sense.

EDINBURGH,  
*November 1934.*



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# AN OLD CURLER'S LETTERS

TO

HIS NEPHEW

## LETTER I

MY DEAR CHARLES,

I was glad to learn from your last letter asking me to give to you some curling "tips" that you had now started the game in earnest and were beginning to enjoy it so much. My delay in answering your letter has been caused principally by the fact that I did not know where to begin, in consequence of curling being so essentially a team game where each position is of the utmost importance. I have, however, come to the conclusion that it would be easier for you to understand my hints were I to assume in the following letters that you commence your curling career as No. 1 and gradually work upwards till you become skip.

Your affectionate Uncle,

ROGER.

## LETTER II

MY DEAR CHARLES,

No. 1

As you are supposed to be just commencing to curl, I shall, in order to avoid confusion, only deal in this letter with the following simple points, viz. :

- I. How to hold a Curling stone ;
- II. How to deliver it ;
- III. How to put on " Handle " or " Turn,"  
and
- IV. Where to place your stones at No I.

## I

## HOW TO HOLD A CURLING STONE

Hold the stone as you would hold a billiard cue and do not grasp the handle firmly in your hand as a policeman would grasp his baton. By so doing you will acquire a delicacy of touch which is one of the essentials in successful curling.

## II

## HOW TO DELIVER A STONE

Unfortunately I can only advise you with regard to the manner of delivering a stone from a "crampit," but I am sure that you will find that the directions which I give will apply generally, *mutatis mutandis*, to the delivery from a "hack," which is preferred to a "crampit" by a large body of curlers. In playing from a crampit (1) Stand with your right foot pressed comfortably against the back of the crampit, with the pressure resting principally upon your toes, and (2) Place your left foot close to your right one and pointing towards your "setting," which is the direction in which you should step when delivering the stone. Your skip will give to you with his besom your "setting," or the spot at which you are to aim. Refrain from looking at your feet to see that you are putting the stone down properly, as most beginners do when delivering it, but concentrate upon your "setting" and try to deliver the stone as nearly as you can in the direction of your

skip's besom. So important a part does "playing your setting" play in the game that it is one of the things that you must pick up as quickly as possible. I think that you will find it of assistance to you in acquiring this faculty if at first you continue to move your hand in the direction of your setting even after you have actually let go of the stone itself.

### III

#### HOW TO PUT ON "HANDLE" OR "TURN"

This is really a very easily acquired art, and you should be able to put on "handle" instinctively after a very few attempts, provided you start upon the proper principle. There are two "handles" or "turns," technically called respectively the "in turn," or the "out turn," according to whether you make the stone come in from your left or from your right. If you "stand at ease" you will see that your hands hang naturally in a particular position. You will also discover, if you care to take the trouble to try, that in throwing anything underhand your hand will assume



of its own accord much the same position immediately before you let go of the object. The whole secret of putting on handle is by making use of this knowledge and turning your hand slightly out of this natural position and forcing nature to make it instinctively return to it again before you deliver the stone. In other words, all that you have to do is that, instead of holding the stone with the front of its handle pointing straight before you, you hold it with the front pointing either slightly towards you or away from you, and without realising that you have been doing anything you will find, when you have played a shot, that somehow you have put on "in turn" or "out turn," as the case may be.

#### IV

##### WHERE TO PLACE YOUR STONES AT NO. 1

Leading stones should come to rest in front of the tee, as if they go sailing through the house they are neither of any use in themselves nor can they be made use of by the subsequent players on your side. Your skip will indicate

by way of handkerchief or otherwise where he wishes your stone to come to rest. It is generally of advantage to play the stone at a pace slightly under the pace required to reach the spot indicated and to rely upon judicious sweeping to bring it there. Paradoxical as it may seem, it has almost become a truism in modern curling that a perfectly played leading stone is one that requires to be swept, as it enables the skip to have more control over the placing of it and also tends to eliminate the risk of its being too far up, and therefore ineffective.

Perhaps I should, as a sort of P.S. to this letter, recommend you to get a first-rate pair of modern curling stones at once if you do not already possess such a pair. It is false economy to go on using an inferior pair of stones as it spoils your pleasure in the game and subjects you to a handicap too heavy for even a potential curler to carry.

Your affectionate Uncle,

ROGER.

## LETTER III

## No. 2

MY DEAR CHARLES,

You are now called upon to play in what, though not generally recognised, is in some ways perhaps the most difficult position in the rink owing to the fact that the margin of error allowed to No. 2 is probably less than is allowed to any other player. Pace is no doubt all important at No. 1, but a good skip will endeavour as far as possible to assist his No. 1 to find and also to keep his pace, and will avoid even asking him to change his handle unless it is necessary to do so. Playing at No. 1, although frequently monotonous, is accordingly comparatively easy, as once you are lucky enough to find your touch, sometimes no easy matter, you are asked to play practically the same shot over and over again. At No. 2, however, things are different, because, however much your skip may try to assist you, obviously you must occasionally, though generally too frequently, be asked to do shots calculated to make the retention of your touch difficult, and yet you are expected to retain it

nevertheless. Further, it largely depends upon No. 2 whether the head is to turn out well or ill. Most big ends lost are, I am afraid, due to a lapse on the part of No. 2. He is the foundation consolidater of the end which means that he must have as many stones as possible in the house and have his guards close up without being too strong and doing harm, which is never an easy matter to accomplish successfully. A long guard, while it may be excellent at No. 3 or No. 4, is probably the worst shot that it is possible for a No. 2 to play. Seldom is it effective even as a guard at the time when it is played, and yet unfortunately it frequently becomes, or is made by your opponents to become, such a subsequent stumbling-block to your side as to necessitate your skip wasting a valuable stone upon its removal. Looked at from a slightly different aspect a long guard, when played by No. 2, is again found to be of no practical value as it is naturally too far back to be raised with the view either of (1) putting things right after they have gone badly (probably through a fluke) or (2) of adding another point to the score when things have gone well.

Always endeavour when playing not to think of the possible harm which you may do, as the fear of doing harm is in reality responsible for the most of the ineffective, and for a large proportion of the actually harmful, shots played during a match.

Do not be distressed if after you have played both of your stones your opponents still lie shot. It is almost generally an advantage to your side at this period of the game to be lying a safe second rather than to be lying the actual shot, especially if the latter's vulnerability is a matter of grave concern. If you have enabled your skip to obtain command of the centre ice, which usually means of the situation, and have deprived your opponents of the initiative, you will have fulfilled successfully the actual playing part allotted to you. Try, however, to remember that at No. 2 you are simply a player and a sweeper and be content in consequence to leave the direction of the game in the more competent hands of your skip and of his No. 3, and be prepared to start sweeping instantly whenever called upon to do so.

To be proficient at No. 2 you must have

the various different shots at your command. With your knowledge of golf I am sure that you will appreciate what I mean when I say that each shot must be a crisp shot in itself, whether it be a half shot, a three-quarter shot, or a full shot, and that a mongrel combination of all three will never do at all ; and further, that the chief enemy of Curling mankind is a faulty back swing. If you wish to play a slow shot take a short back swing and a short step forward, and when you wish to increase the pace of your shot increase the length of your back swing and of your step. Avoid as you would the devil trying to put on pace by shoving. When you wish to do a really fast shot take a long step, but not too quickly, and follow the advice which I once heard an old curler give to a beginner and "let the doup of your stane see the sun." You cannot be too particular in trying to cultivate a correct back swing, as anything of the nature of what in cricket would be called round arm bowling is fatal to accuracy of direction.

I cannot finish this letter in a better way than by trying to impress upon you the necessity of learning to sweep in the proper manner,

as a team possessing sweeping power holds an untold advantage over a team which does not. There is no mystery about sweeping. All that is necessary is to take short, quick, vigorous sweeps with your besom in front of the stone and at right angles to the direction in which it is travelling so as to cause as much friction upon the ice as possible. You will, however, learn more in five minutes by watching a first class sweeper at work than by poring for hours over books upon the subject.

Your affectionate Uncle,

ROGER.

#### LETTER IV

MY DEAR CHARLES,

No. 3

You have now risen to be No. 3. You may be, and probably are, the best player on your side, but do not let that fact affect your loyalty to your skip as it is imperative, in view of your respective positions, that you and he should pull together without the slightest hitch. A skip requires, and is entitled



to rely upon getting, the whole-hearted support of his team in his endeavours to overcome the various unforeseen difficulties which invariably arise during the course of a match and has naturally to depend largely upon the loyal co-operation of his No. 3 if these endeavours are to be successful. Make sure, therefore, that such co-operation is always available. Team work is essential, and consequently nothing is more detrimental to success than that a No. 3 should cast doubts upon when playing, or should suddenly start to overturn when directing, the building-up policy which may have been adopted by his skip, however erroneous he may consider it to have been. There is no room in any team for two skips with divergent views.

When your skip is playing you are no doubt technically in supreme command of the end, but do not let any feeling of importance cause you to be above taking a hint from your skip whose knowledge of the game is in all probability much greater than your own, otherwise he would not be your skip. There is one question especially upon which I consider that you should always be willing to take



a hint from your skip without showing the slightest hesitation, and that is upon the question of setting. If your skip suggests your altering the setting which you are giving to him, do so at once, for the simple practical reason that his knowledge of the ice and of its vagaries is naturally superior to the knowledge which you possess, and his opinion is consequently more likely to be correct.

Should you in turn have difficulty over your skip's setting, do not make a fuss, but simply say to him when you get the opportunity, "Don't you think you are setting me rather too narrow or rather too wide?" as the case may be, and leave it at that. By so acting you will in a fairly tactful manner have put your skip upon his guard, and if he is a reasonable being at all, your difficulties should be at an end.

I have always considered No. 3 to be the nicest position of any in the rink as you have such a variety of shots to play without the skip's responsibilities. No. 3, however, has unfortunately his own responsibilities, and responsibilities of a serious character, as he has to deal with situations which can only arise



when he is in control and has to direct the last two and probably most critical shots of the end, handicapped by an imperfect knowledge of the ice. The main object accordingly of this letter is to assist you to meet those situations and difficulties when they arise.

The possible loss of big ends is always to be feared. Never be afraid to lose one shot at any end when things are going badly. I have never seen a game won where the winning side never scored more than one shot at any one end. I have, however, seen a game lost through the failure of the defeated side to score more than one shot at any one end even although they had actually won more ends than the victorious side.

At this stage of the game avoid, when things have gone wrong, trying to retrieve the situation by giving a "naked" draw unless you are compelled to do so, or unless your skip is playing the last stone of the end. In the first place it is a difficult shot for a skip, who has probably been striking, to play, and in the second place even if he plays the shot perfectly you are only putting a dangerous weapon into the hands of your adversaries. The danger, I think, is

obvious—if your skip plays the draw with his first stone, and the opposing skip has two stones to play, the latter plays his first shot at a little more than drawing strength, removes your stone and wicks into an ungetatable position and you are worse off than before. If on the other hand your skip plays the draw with his second stone, the opposing skip simply takes it slowly with his second shot, lies and adds rather easily another point to his side's score. Further, should the sole guardian of your interests in the house be a solitary ewe lamb, try to prolong its existence by supplying it with a companion or by protecting it in a better way if a better way suggests itself to you so as to prevent, if possible, a big end being scored against you.

Should you, however, find yourself probably unexpectedly in control of the situation and in the fortunate position of being able to score a big end, provided your skip can only remove your opponents' one ewe lamb, do not move a muscle but simply direct your skip to remove it as quietly as you would direct him to remove an ordinary stone, and in most cases he will do so. Bear in mind that even your skip suffers

from human failings, and that if you go out of your way to excite him by getting it into his head that it is an exceptionally difficult and important shot that you are asking him to play, the chances are that he will play a bad one, and will, in consequence, allow once again to escape from death an annoyingly hostile little creature that has already been allowed too frequently to save its side from defeat during the course of a phenomenally long existence.

In the placing of guards, No. 3 may sometimes have to adopt slightly different principles owing to so many stones being in play and the consequent risk of flukes being greater. Generally speaking, however, the same principles apply which applied earlier in the game with this possible exception that whereas a long guard which was looked upon as a curse when played by No. 2 may be looked upon as a blessing when played by the skip. Frequently you will find when directing at No. 3 that the line of attack upon your winner is completely blocked upon one side and is limited to the other side alone. It is natural that you should wish to guard as much as possible of the vulnerable side. In trying to effect this I

consider it advisable that you should remember that you have always the breadth of a stone to come and go upon and should try to place the required guard as wide as possible, being of course careful not to leave sufficient space for a running shot to get through on the inside of the guard.

Again, you may have to make up your mind how to direct your skip to take the shot against you when playing on a rink which has a slip on one side and of necessity an exaggerated borrow on the other. Your difficulty will be that if you direct your skip to play on the slip side you will find that while in the case of a slow shot the handle will be sufficient to overcome the slip, yet in the case of a firm shot the stone will persist in going out against the handle in such an uncertain manner that it is impossible for you to gauge the setting. In these circumstances do not hesitate to give to your skip a narrow setting and to ask him to play fast up the side with the exaggerated borrow, as with all its faults this side is at least honest and you know that the stone will always come in. Should you on the other hand be lying the shot on such a rink, you will

naturally do the exact opposite and ask your skip to play a guard straight on the stone with the appropriate handle required to counteract the slip, which is possibly the easiest shot that any skip can reasonably expect to be given by his No. 3, and peace accordingly should once again reign in Israel.

Your affectionate Uncle,

ROGER.

## LETTER V

MY DEAR CHARLES,

### *Skip*

You are now at the top of the ladder. As the subject of skipping is a large one, I have thought it advisable to deal in this letter simply with what I may call the general conduct of a skip and to leave the question of his duties as a director to be dealt with in a subsequent letter. There is no doubt that the position of a skip is a responsible one, as the whole morale of the team is influenced by him. It is not too much to say that it largely depends upon the skip himself whether he is to



be the head of a united team working together or merely one of four individual curlers.

In the first place, when skipping make a point of always being pleasant to your opposing skip, but never let this interfere with your giving your undivided attention to your own players. There is nothing more upsetting to a player than to find, when he looks up for his directions, simply his skip's besom marking the setting while the skip himself is not looking at him but gaily chatting away to his *vis-à-vis* in the house. In the second place, never forget that your players are human beings, probably rather susceptible human beings, and try to treat them as such by keeping in touch with them and their difficulties as much as possible. So very little said or done makes such a vast difference. It is always easy to keep in touch with your No. 3, but I admit that it is sometimes difficult to do so in the case of your No. 1 and No. 2, and yet they are the players most in need of acknowledgment in consequence of their holding what in their eyes may appear to be lowly positions. Personally I am always sorry for my No. 1 and No. 2 when I see

them playing well and sweeping hard, as I am sure that they are feeling, as I have so often felt myself, that they are rather out of it, seeing that they are merely players and have no say in the direction of the game. I am perfectly certain that were a skip occasionally even to say to either of these players "It's a fine day," it would largely help to remove this feeling of *quasi* isolation. A further very important point arises in connection with the treatment of your players, and that is, never curse a player for playing a bad shot and never forget to give credit to a player for playing a good one. When a player plays a bad shot the poor wretch knows quite well that he has done so and is naturally annoyed with himself, and if you go and curse him you only make matters worse and probably make it more difficult for him to pull himself together again. The acknowledgment of a good shot, although so simple, is too often forgotten. A mere pleased wave of the skip's arm is enough, and yet it means so much to the player however seasoned he may be.

When you lose a match, which you must



often do, be big enough to accept the responsibility and do not try to explain away your defeat by blaming your players. Another duty which every skip owes to his players is to make himself thoroughly conversant with the rules of the game.

As you grow older you will come across various types of skips. Some are personalities, and fall to be treated with respect. Many are not. The skip who does a few gallery shots during the match and expects after each one of them to be ostentatiously congratulated by every member of his team is not a skip to be afraid of, as in nine cases out of ten the necessity for the shots was caused entirely by his own bad skipping. The skip, however, to be feared is the old skip whose whole attention appears to you to be taken up with trying to get his pipe to light, whereas in reality he is taking in every move in the game and who also appears to you to be doing nothing, and yet for some unexplained reason to be winning. It is no use your complaining to your friends after having been beaten by such a skip that you only lost by a "ghastly fluke" and giving yourself away by explain-

ing to them "that the old devil who was skipping against me to-day couldn't curl at all. He only played three decent shots the whole time, and by bad luck he cut us out of a sitting five with his first one and scored a three and a four end respectively against us with his other two." My dear boy, there was no fluke at all about it. The actual fact of the matter was that for the first time in your life you were up against a real skip, past his best, no doubt, and yet you failed to realise it. What you entirely omitted to observe was that the "old devil," as you call him, (1) was getting his men cheerily to do the hard work, and do it well, and (2) still retained the supreme quality in a skip of being able to rise to the occasion and steadying his team by playing his three good shots when they were needed. Where so many skips who are excellent curlers signally fail is that through temperament or otherwise, they, unlike your old devil, select the critical occasions as the most suitable times to play the few bad shots which they play during the whole game.

I used to consider in a tight golf match that

the thirteenth hole was the crucial one, as the player who won that hole generally won the match. Similarly, in a close curling match I have generally found that the tide usually turns one way or another about the same period in the game. I mention this simply to warn you to be specially wide awake about this time.

There is one further small matter which I feel that I should allude to, and that is never stop in the middle of a game to go and have a drink of any kind with your *vis-à-vis*, especially if the pressure is beginning to tell and you hold a slight lead at the time. By all means have a friendly glass with your opponents after the match is finished and fight your battles over again, but be content with that. By going out for a drink in the middle a skip certainly breaks the sequence, but why he should so often also alter the run of the game is one of those mysteries which I have never been able to understand.

Your affectionate Uncle,

ROGER.

## LETTER VI

MY DEAR CHARLES,

SKIP, *continued*

It now only remains for me to deal with your duties as a director. The first and principal essential in a skip when directing is that he should be able to make up his mind quickly and to give his directions with decision. It is fatal for a skip to wander round the house with the solemn air of a doctor diagnosing some dreadful malady. His indecision invariably puts his players off either by creating imaginary difficulties in their minds or by causing them unnecessary annoyance over being kept hanging so long over their shots.

Nerves play a prominent part in curling, and big ends win matches. It is always good policy to attack, whenever possible, your adversary's one ewe lamb for the moral effect alone which it produces. Accordingly you should always try to subject your adversary to as many shocks as possible and even take risks to effect your purpose. An ordinary skip may, and frequently does, save one or

perhaps two big ends to begin with, but even a good skip will, when subjected for the third time of asking to this saving strain, in all probability miss a comparatively easy shot, and your object will in consequence have been achieved. The moral effect of the loss of a big end upon your opponents is great. It generally causes an immediate deterioration upon their play and may even start the cracking-up process. Be careful, however, to take your risks at the proper time and never, unless compelled to do so, take a risk unless the odds are in your favour. In other words, never take a risk when the loss to be suffered if it fails is out of all proportion to the advantage to be gained if it succeeds.

Generally try to give to your players easy shots, and if there are two ways of doing a shot always give the easier way. At most games the player who plays, or is allowed to play, the greater number of easy shots usually wins the match. That is why Colonel Bogey is so difficult to beat at golf. The only probable exception to this rule is in the case of No. 1 and No. 2 already referred to, when it may be preferable to give to them the shot

with the more difficult handle rather than to risk damaging their sense of touch. A simple illustration of this rule is shown in the case of shots where pace is essential and when it may fall upon you to ask one of your players to play two consecutive shots of the same or of a similar character. In such circumstances repeat, whenever possible, the identical direction already given and avoid, for instance, asking your player to play his first shot up the centre or cleaner ice with the one handle and to play his second shot up the outside or dirtier ice with the reverse handle, thereby necessitating his playing his second shot at an uncertain slightly increased pace and negating completely the knowledge and confidence which he has obtained from the playing of his first shot.

Experience will very soon open your eyes to the great assistance so conferred upon your players as the improvement upon their play will be self evident.

Watch carefully every stone which your players play, and particularly the bad ones. By judicious sweeping you may sometimes turn a bad stone into a comparatively useful one, but what is of far greater importance you may often



stop it from doing harm either by itself or by preventing it from coming to rest in a position which would enable your adversaries to make use of it by way of a dangerous wick or otherwise. Further, unless you give your undivided attention to every stone played, and to what it is doing, especially on a tricky rink, you will be unable to ascertain the correct settings to give to your players and will, by giving to them in consequence faulty settings, be adopting one of the surest methods of causing them to have no confidence in you as a skip. Do not, however, be satisfied with merely watching the stones which may have been or which are actually being played, but like a good billiard player be always thinking ahead and planning the probable future of the end. A skip who is content to take the view that sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof and who refuses in consequence to take thought for the morrow will too often find himself in the unfortunate position of either (1) being unable to press home potential advantages which a little forethought would have enabled him to have done, or (2) floundering in difficulties which a little anticipation would have enabled him to have avoided.

Should you be in the fortunate position of seeing, unobserved by your adversary on the tee, a head gradually developing into a big end in your favour and only requiring one shot to make it one in fact, do not in these circumstances be in too great a hurry to play that shot as it may lose much of its effectiveness, but be content to make two bites of a cherry and delay delivering the blow till the proper moment when it may be too late for your opponents to do much saving.

Do not put too much faith in what on paper looks a perfect guard, as a good curler can, by hitting the guard on the proper place, remove both it and the guarded stone and lie himself. On the other hand, never despise what at first sight may appear to you to be imperfect looking guards, as you will generally find that they are like mules, and are in reality much more useful than they look like being. In guarding the raise of a stone try to "cabbage" or lock the stone with the guard so as to prevent it being raised in the direction in which your adversaries may desire to raise it.

I cannot, of course, give to you an exhaustive summary of the different shots to be played



and when they should be played. I have already referred to some, and shall now only mention a very few others.

In the case of drawing shots especially always endeavour to give to your own players and to deprive your opponents of the assistance of a "rest," should they happen to play rather too hard, as it invariably adds to their confidence.

Should your opponents be lying two or perhaps three shots slightly behind the tee on the left of your player, and should you wish him to raise in for shot one of your own stones lying in front of the house, then direct him to play the shot with the "out turn," as if he plays the shot rather strongly, which he probably will do, he will, in view of the direction in which his stone is coming in, tend to push the stone to be raised into the bosom of enemy stones and will thus make the raised stone into almost as useful a counter as if he had played the proper strength, whereas if he had played the same shot at the same pace with the "in turn" he would simply have pushed the stone to be raised through the open space behind. You will, I am sure, find the same general principles applicable to and of assistance to you in the direction of various

other shots too numerous for me to specify here. There are no doubt circumstances in which a raise should be effected in exactly the reverse way from the way described, but that is entering into the regions of more advanced curling.

If you have to elect between taking or guarding the raise of a dangerous enemy stone lying in front of the house, generally speaking, you are better, things being equal, to take the stone. Sometimes you cannot do this. Then you must just guard the raise, or better still, if you are in a position to do so, push up one of your own stones in front of the dangerous stone and you will have blocked the raise of the latter in the most effectual manner possible.

Always try to make each shot do as much good or harm as you can. For instance, it is often easy to take an enemy stone slowly and to guard with the resulting wick one of your own ones at the same time.

I have somehow found the taking off properly of a guard, and especially of a long guard, one of the most difficult shots on the ice, although this should not be the case. Probably this is due partly to its being looked upon as

an easy shot and partly to the habit adopted by so many skips of allowing their players to take the guard in their own way. The result is that the latter having no proper setting generally play too hard and either miss the stone altogether or else hit it plumb in the centre and execute a most perfect "Chap and lie." My own view is that the taking of a guard would be, as it should be, an easy shot if only skips would set their players as carefully for it as for any other shot.

When you have a stone lying in front of the house and in trying to get the shot, the choice lies between asking your player to draw round it or to raise it; I prefer to give the raise partly because it is to me the easier shot and partly because, if properly done, it puts you into the comfortable position of being both shot and guarded.

An analysis of these somewhat lengthy letters will, I hope, reveal that what I have in reality been urging upon you to do when skipping was simply to apply the elementary principles of common-sense which unquestionably supply the dominant success factors in Curling, just as they do in most walks in life.

I remember when a boy being much impressed by the worldly wisdom of the successful old cab proprietor who, when reproved by a customer for having such indifferent looking horses in his cabs, retorted: "You don't seem to realise that I have to supply horses for my men and not men for my horses." The old cab proprietor by his retort emphasised, somewhat graphically no doubt, the importance of the not sufficiently recognised golden rule in Curling that it is the province of a skip to supply shots for his players and not players for his shots. My final recommendation to you accordingly is never to disregard these simple common-sense principles, which I have no hesitation in saying form the most efficient weapons in the armoury of a successful skip.

I have quite enjoyed writing to you, and I shall now look forward to hearing of you as a marked man in the Curling world which, with your aptitude for games, I am sure that I shall do within a very short period of time.

Your affectionate Uncle,

ROGER.

## APPENDIX

### THE RULES OF THE GAME

Rules Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 deal, under reference to a diagram, with the rink and its measurements in of necessity a somewhat exhaustive manner. As the laying out of the rink seldom comes under modern conditions within the province of a skip, those four rules have been omitted.

5. All Matches shall be of a certain number of Heads, or Shots, or by Time as may be agreed on, or as fixed by an Umpire at the outset. In the event of Competitors being equal, play shall be continued by all the Rinks engaged for one or more Heads, as may be agreed on, until the Match has been decided.

6. Every Rink of players shall be composed of four a side, each using two Stones, and no player shall wear boots, tramps, or sandals with spikes or other contrivance which shall break or damage the surface of the ice. The

rotation of play observed during the first Head of a Match shall not be changed.

7. The Skips opposing each other shall settle by lot, or in any other way they may agree upon, which party shall lead at the first Head, after which the winners of the preceeding Head shall do so.

8. All Curling-Stones shall be of a circular shape. No Stone, including handle and bolts, shall be of a greater weight than 44 lbs. imperial, or of greater circumference than 36 inches, or of less height than one-eighth part of its greatest circumference.

9. No Stone shall be substituted for another (except under Rules 10 and 15) after a match has been begun, but the sole of a Stone may be reversed at any time during a Match, provided the player is ready to play when his turn comes.

10. Should a Stone be broken, the largest fragment shall be considered in the Game for that Head—the player being entitled to use another Stone, or another pair, during the remainder of the Game.

11. All Stones which roll over, or come to rest on their sides or tops, shall be removed from the ice.

12. Should the Handle quit the Stone in delivery, the player must keep hold of it; otherwise he shall not be entitled to replay the shot.

13. Players, during the course of each Head, shall be arranged along the sides, but well off the centre of the Rink, as the Skips may direct; and no one, except when sweeping according to rule, shall go upon the centre of the Rink, or cross it, under any pretence whatever. Skips only shall be entitled to stand within the Seven-Foot Circle. The Skip of the playing party shall have the choice of place, and shall not be obstructed by the other Skip in front of the Tee, while behind it the privileges of both, in regard to sweeping, shall be equal.

14. Each player must play from the hack or crampit, and must release the handle of the stone before the stone is clearly over the sweeping score drawn across the tee.



15. Each player must be ready to play when his turn comes, and must not take more than a reasonable time to play. Should a player play a wrong Stone, the Stone which ought to have been played shall be put in its place.

16. If a player should play out of his turn, the Stone so played may be stopped in its progress, and returned to the player. Should the mistake not be discovered till the Stone is at rest, or has struck another Stone, the opposing Skip shall have the option of adding one to his score and allowing the Game to proceed, or of declaring the Head null and void. If another Stone be played before the mistake is discovered, the Head must be finished as if it had been properly played from the beginning.

17. The sweeping shall be under the direction and control of the Skips. The player's party may sweep the ice from the Hog Score next the player to the Tee, and any Stone set in motion by a played Stone may be swept by the party to which it belongs. When snow is falling or drifting, the player's party



may sweep the ice from Tee to Tee. The sweeping shall always be to a side, and no sweepings shall be left in front of a running Stone. Both Skips have equal right to clean and sweep the ice behind the Tee at any time, except when a player is being directed by his Skip. At the end of any Head, either of the Skips may call upon the whole of the players to clean and sweep the entire Rink. If objected to, this shall be subject to the approval of the acting Umpire.

18. (a) If, in sweeping or otherwise, a running Stone is marred by any of the party to which it belongs, it may, in the option of the opposing Skip, be put off the ice; but if by any of the adverse party, it may be placed where the Skip of the party to which it belongs shall direct. If marred in any other way, the player shall replay the Stone.

(b) Should any played Stone be displaced before the Head is reckoned, it shall be placed as nearly as possible where it lay, to the satisfaction of the Skip opposed to the party displacing. If displaced by any neutral party, both Skips should agree upon the position to

which it is to be returned ; but if they do not agree, the Umpire shall decide.

19. No measuring of shots shall be allowed previous to the termination of the Head. Disputed shots shall be determined by the Skips ; if they disagree, by the Umpire ; or, when there is no Umpire, by some neutral person chosen by the Skips. All measurements shall be taken from the centre of the Tee to the nearest part of the stone.

20. The Skip shall have the exclusive regulation and direction of the Game for his Rink, and may play last Stone, or any part in the Game he pleases, but he shall not be entitled to change his position when that has been fixed. When his turn to play comes, he shall select one of his players to act as Skip in his place, and take the position of an ordinary player. He shall not have any choice or direction in the game till he returns to the Tee as Skip.

21. If any player engaged in the Game shall speak to, annoy, taunt, or interrupt another, not being of his own side, while in the act of

delivering his Stone, one shot for each offence may be added to the score of the party so annoyed.

22. If from any change of weather after a Match has been begun, or from any other reasonable cause, one party shall desire to shorten the Rink, or to change to another, and if the two Skips cannot agree, the Umpire shall, after seeing one end played, determine whether and how much the Rink shall be shortened, or whether it shall be changed, and his decision shall be final. Should there be no acting Umpire, or should he be otherwise engaged, the two Skips may call in any neutral Curler to decide, and his powers shall be equal with those of the Umpire. The Umpire shall, in the event of the ice appearing to him to be dangerous, stop the Match. He shall postpone it, even if begun, when the state of the ice is in his opinion not fitted for testing the Curling skill of the players. Except in very special circumstances, of which the Umpire shall be judge, a Match shall not proceed, or be continued, when a thaw has fairly set in, or when snow is falling and likely to continue during

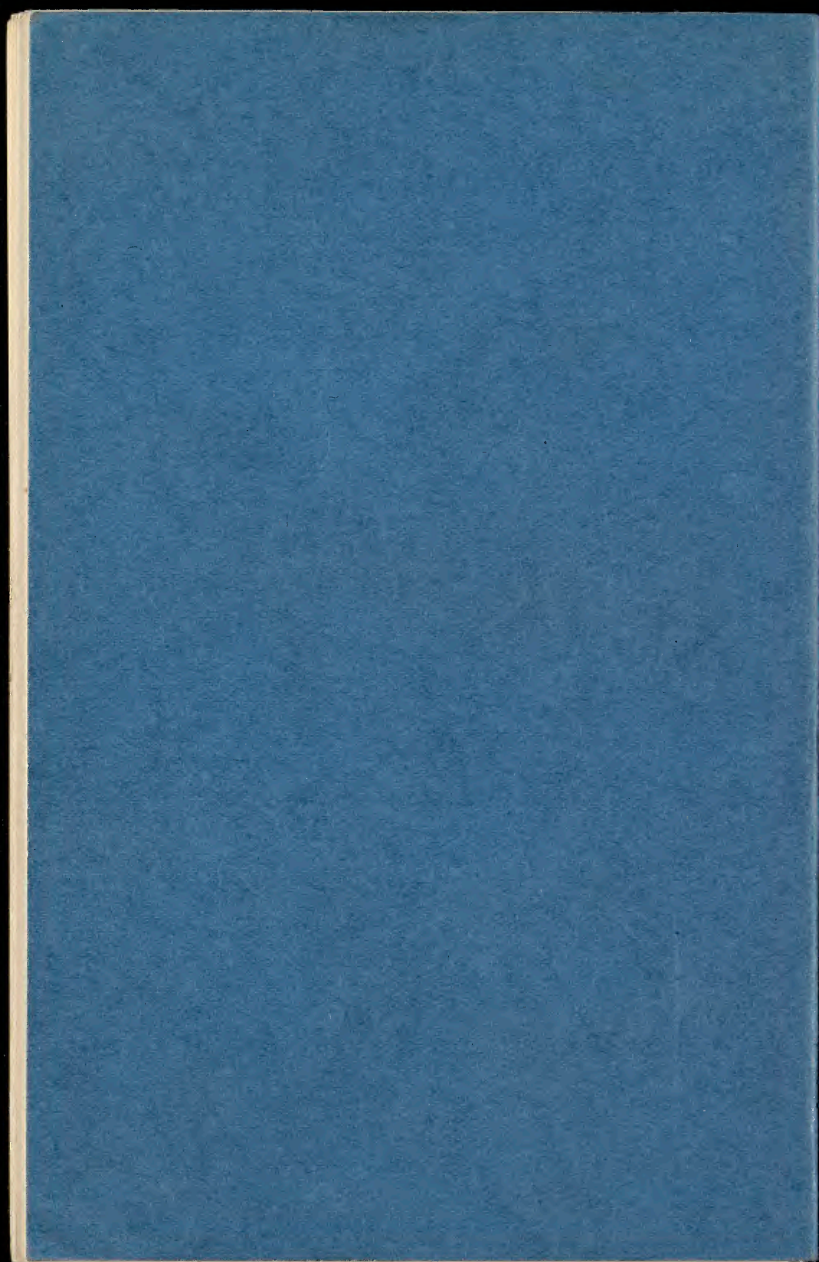
the Match, nor shall it be continued if darkness comes on to prevent the played Stones being well seen by players at the other end of the Rink. In every case of such postponement to another day the Match, when renewed, must be begun *de novo*.

23. Every Stone shall be eligible to count which is not clearly outside the Seven-Foot Circle. Every Stone which does not clear the Hog Score shall be a Hog, and must be removed from the ice, but no Stone shall be considered a Hog which has struck another Stone lying in position. Stones passing the Back Score, and lying clear of it, must be removed from the ice, as also any Stone which in its progress touches the swept snow on either side of the Rink.











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AN OLD CURLER'S  
LETTERS  
TO HIS NEPHEW



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G. CRURIE STEUART