

THE SECRETS OF LAWN TENNIS

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The Secrets of Lawn Tennis by F. W. Payn

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SECRETS OF LAWN TENNIS.

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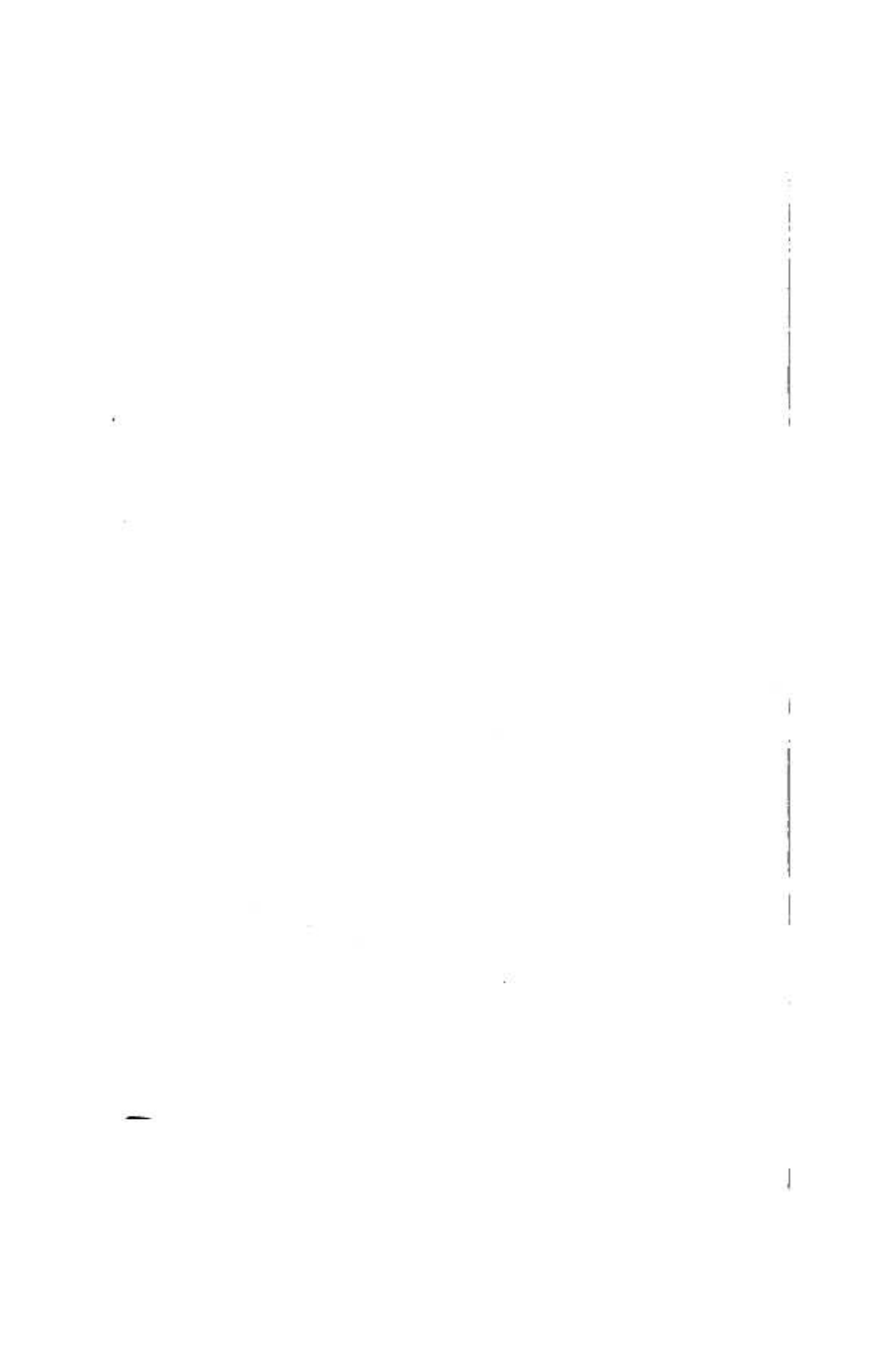
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Singles ex-Champion of Sweden, Gravesend, Scotland, Nottingham, Russia, Blackheath, Denmark, etc., etc.; Doubles ex-Champion of Holland, Scotland, Russia, Folkestone, Sweden, Vienna, etc.; Finalist for the Singles Championship of Germany, Austria, Holland, and the North of England, and for the Doubles Championships of Ireland, Germany, Austria, and the North of England.



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PREFACE.

IN view of the formidable length of the "bill of fare" set forth in the index of this book, it may be well to state at the outset that only a few of the chapters are at all lengthy, and that most of them are short articles which have appeared at various times in *Lawn Tennis* and can each be read through in a few minutes. Those who do not want to trouble themselves with pure tennis technicalities but who might possibly be interested by other parts of the book will have no difficulty in avoiding the former, for they are all grouped together in consecutive chapters (V. to XI.) in the second section. No doubt the book would have been improved by some action photographs (which may be added in a later edition), but my aim has been to make the letterpress clear and explicit rather than to rely on the adventitious aid of the camera. There has lately been such a deluge of "action photographs" that it may be well to point out that the services of a good photographer are not in themselves a sufficient qualification for writing a book on lawn tennis if neither the tennis-writer nor his "action-photographer" is acquainted with the first rudiments of the practice of lawn tennis.

The question of diet has been dealt with at some length in the present work. Although most of my conclusions have been drawn primarily from lawn-tennis playing, I venture to hope that they may possess some interest and value not merely for tennis players but for others who are interested in the subject. For the information of those who have lately been "revising" their ordinary diet, I may mention that

I shall shortly publish a cheap work (called "The Great Diet Question") dealing almost exclusively with that topic.

I am well aware that a book such as this, which might be supposed, from its title, to deal solely with a particular form of light recreation, starts at a great disadvantage with those who do not follow that recreation. I venture, however, to think that some of the articles in the first and third sections of the book, such as those on "Born Champions" and "Climate," may be interesting to some who are outside the lawn-tennis world.

Although it is hardly likely that I shall be accused by any reader of this book of under-rating the importance of really athletic games, I desire to protest in the name of common sense against the views on this subject expressed in a recent book by Mr. Eustace Miles called "A Boy's Control and Self-Expression." At page 322 of that production he says of "play" that it has the *power to train people for nearly the whole of life*, and on page 329 he says: "Surely, on the whole, play is better for the world and for posterity than most things that most people do now. If we contrast it with most of the other outlets which life offers as alternatives, how many of these are, on the whole, both so genuinely attractive and so harmless or positively useful?" Such statements, if acted on, could have but one result, viz., to bring trade to a standstill and man to the workhouse. Considering the amount of attention which Mr. Miles's opinions receive, it may not be amiss to cite several other gems from the same chef d'œuvre. At page 332 he says:—"It is not too much to say that by studying the behaviour of boys in games, athletics, and self-defence, we could most easily find out *in what subjects, in what professions, they are likely to succeed.*" We can picture to ourselves the schoolmaster of the future scanning his pupils on the tennis court and saying to himself, "I see Brown 'smashes' like a surveyor, Jones 'cuts' like a cotton-spinner, Robinson's under-hand drive stamps him as a solicitor, Johnson volleys like a born analytical chemist, and White has the regular

'diplomatic' service." Mr. Miles's sense of proportion is exquisite. He displays it most strikingly in his remarks about "unathletic hobbies," which is the Milesian term for that practical education in chemistry and technology by means of which the United States has lately astonished the commercial world. He speaks of technology (*the one thing* which can preserve our manufactures and export trade under modern competition) as "a healthy or, at any rate, harmless attraction," the object of which is "some sort of self-control," or "some sort of self-expression," but never "some sort of bread and butter." He includes engineering, modelling, drawing, and carpentering under the aforesaid term, and he seems to regard them as a new kind of squash racquets. In fact, he definitely calls them "a supplement to good play." We can now perceive that St. Paul's Cathedral and the steam-engine were merely the result of the "unathletic hobbies" of Wren and Stephenson. Mr. Miles, in fact, classes these arts and sciences with "Bridge" and "Nap," for he says: "If science does not interest the schoolboys, *competitive card games may be substituted.*" At a time when we see our foreign trade slowly vanishing through our lack of technical education among the better classes, no madder term for it than "unathletic hobbies" could possibly have been coined. The German "hobby" for coal-tar products alone is said to yield them many millions a year. I have examined some statements on diet, &c., made by Mr. Miles in the 2000 and more pages he has given to the public in my other work on "The Great Diet Question," so I will merely add here his new definition of the soul (from page 408 of "A Boy's Control") which I recommend to the theologians of the day: "*The soul involves the all-round fitness, including a feeling of satisfaction and a successful body and mind in many spheres.*"

In concluding this somewhat rambling preface, I would express the hope that although the present volume is in fact a miscellany of various tennis subjects, it will not therefore turn out to be what has been called a "mis-sell-any."