

Kelly Pool in the Days of Real Sport.

By H. ZOLLARS.

SAID the late Hugh E. Keough at the time the police were raiding the games, "Kelly pool was invented by Kelly Mulvaney and discovered by the police," but he did not mention the fact that the police only discovered the game after twenty years of arduous hunting.

Such a discovery should take rank with the discovery of the north pole, radium, and the fact that restaurant patrons can wait on themselves.

C. Kelly Mulvaney, an old time billiard hall keeper of the old time school, invented the game in April, 1887, and for twenty years it flourished in the loop, spread to the outlying districts of the city, and, like a benevolent plague, ran rapidly over the land, infecting pool bugs in California and Maine, Kalamazoo and Kankakee.

The game ran wide open in those days—the only introduction necessary was a supply of ready cash and two hands, or even one, with which to hold a cue. Special tables were set aside for it and in the old days thirty players might have been seen at one time playing on a single table.

In those days of real sport one entered a billiard hall and down in a corner the visitor saw crowds of excited and happy—or downcast—men gathered around a pool table laughing, talking, drinking, smoking, and cussing their luck. Several tables were reserved for Kelly pool, for in those days when there were "sports" what were sports a single table would not have sufficed for the crowds that wished to try their skill and luck.

It was an all day and an all night game then. Those were the happy days when virile man was the boss of the roost, when the man of the house returned at all hours of the day or night and gave no excuse at all or muttered, "Bin playin' kelloolmuh-dear."

Those joy filled days—like the days of the Kerry dancing—are "gone alas like my youth too soon."

* *

Sports Dived in Kelly Pool.

Kelly was an "open game" then—which means that any newcomer might take a cue, take a hand, and engage in the game without previous introduction and in spite of the fact that the other players didn't want him in; they could stop playing if they wished, but in no other way could they prevent a newcomer taking part.

The game started then about 1 o'clock in the afternoon. The first comers as a rule were out of town men—men who were in Chicago to make an honest and sincere endeavor to spend \$500 in two days before they must return to Jimtown, Wis. Somewhat later in the day the business men joined the gay livers. They were staid, respectable, solid business men, with each foot firmly planted on a money bag.

After an arduous day—of five hours—on the bourse, after bullying the bears and bearing the bulls, after the thrills of gambling for hundreds of thousands, they came to the pool halls for a little relaxation and staked quarters on the nine ball.

Meanwhile the race track gamblers were gambling on the green—inclosure of Washington park—betting their last red cent or white silver dollar on Silvia. But about 5:30 they headed toward and looped the loop with a band of money.

The advance guard of the racing men having charged the outworks—the bar—paying cash as they went, hurried back to the billiard hall and dived in the Kelly pool. At their advent some of the millionaire business men quit—the game became too steep—others stuck, and were stuck. The stakes were doubled and redoubled, the sandwiches were ordered, wine flowed like water into a dairyman's milk bucket, and joy was unrefined. Ten,

twenty, and thirty players, not cents, would gather around each table, while the proprietor chuckled to himself:

"John D. R.'s got nuttin' on me.

Pierpont isn't one, two, three;

It's a regular little mint—

Is my tin per cent—

For every other game means a pretty little V."

* *

Game Used to Be Faster.

Kelly was played differently in those days. It needed a more powerful intellect than the modern game, for one must know that 12 plus 19 or 16 plus 15 equaled 31. The present game is not Kelly at all in the true sense. Mr. Mulvaney says it is an unworthy son of an honored father. The real name of the present game is "pea pool," but the name Kelly is in such common usage that in spite of the founder the name will continue to be used. No matter how much we may argue, Mr. Mulvaney always will be famous.

In those days you shook a little ball out of a bottle—the tiny, luck-making balls were numbered from 16 to 30. We'll say you are given the 16 ball—hard luck, but we'll suppose you are unlucky. The object of the game was to get a total of 31 points, just as in pin pool—which is played on a billiard table. If you had the 16 "pea" you naturally tried to "put down" the 15 ball. If you did, you won. If you had the 30 you tried to put down the 1 ball.

It was a much faster game then. Seldom were there more than four or five shots made before somebody carolled, "That's me."

They shook for shots in those days to see who would shoot first, so that luck entered into the game in two ways. With thirty men playing, the last fifteen to shoot generally had the purely artistic pleasure of enjoying the good shots of the other fellow. Before their time came to shoot they had to dig for a quarter. The balls were played in rotation as they are now, but the game was sort of backwards, too, compared with the present game.

For twenty years the guardians of the law watched this game, sadly mystified by its intricacies and heathenish nomenclature. Naturally they couldn't understand the expressions, "Scratch," "That's me." Such a conversation as this puzzled them greatly.

"Ah, ha, the 14 ball! That's little frivolous Heiny. That's muh. Plunk, plunk, plunkity plunk! Down the deep dungeon you go, and pay me, gentlemen."

"Did he Kelly?"

"Like Kelly did. He plunkity plunked the cue ball down the deep dungeon."

* *

As Played Nowadays.

Now, for the benefit of the feminine reader, who has waited many weary hours for the return of her lost one—for husband, brother, or friend fiancé—only to be told he had been spending the evening with Mr. Kelly Poole and a bunch of Iroquois—we'll endeavor to be less technical in explaining the modern game.

Kelly pool is played on a pool table—although some players bounce the ball into the cue racks and cigar stands. A pool table is a green cloth covered table with six more pockets than the average woman has in her dress. Fifteen balls tinted like the coat of many colors are spotted at one end of the table. "Spotted?" That means placed with a ball number 1 covering a spot in the table that looks like a piece of court plaster.

A leather bottle is shaken and out of it little numbered balls are handed to the players. These the highly suspicious players look at surreptitiously then hide carefully in their pockets—so carefully, in fact, that there is great difficulty in finding them later—particu-

larly if one has a number that is pretty sure to win.

Each player keeps his number a dead secret—it is no game for the feminine sex—and no one is supposed to know the number that the other player has drawn, except that the player generally mutters, "O ——" when his ball is tottering on the brink.

The pool balls, arranged in a triangular formation at one end of the table, are numbered from 1 to 15, and the player shooting the white "cue ball" must hit No. 1 first, and when that has dropped into the pocket, No. 2, and so on until the No. 15 ball is put in the pocket.

The object of the game is to hit the 1 ball, 2 ball, or whatever is the smallest numbered ball on the table, with the shot ball, bounce off and by several mysterious convolutions knock into the pocket the 6 ball, which we suppose is your number. Or if he is unable to do this he must wait until 5 ball is put in the pocket, then shoot the 6 down direct.

The fifteen balls being placed in position by the gentlemanly colored gentleman—"racked up," that is—the first player "breaks." To break is to shoot hard and scatter the balls all over the table.

If any ball drops in any pocket the first player shoots again and keeps on shooting as long as he can hit the lowest numbered ball and thereafter "plunk" a ball in the pocket.

The second player shoots with the same limitations, the third player follows, and so on until the man with the 13 number, for instance, puts the 13 ball in the pocket. He thereupon remarks "That's me" in a quiet or exulting tone, depending on his character.

* *

Nobody Ever Wins.

Now, understand, according to the ethics of the game nobody says "It is I," nobody forgets to swear when he "goes dead"—that is, when his numbered ball is put in the pocket by another player—and nobody ever admits he is a winner. After fifteen years of playing the game we are forced to admit we have never seen a winner. Every one loses; that is, every one says he does. A winner at Kelly pool is about as much of a rarity as a frugal man among the bright lights.

Kelly pool is the most sociable game played on a billiard table. C. Kelly Mulvaney should have a bust, a fitting word, placed in the billiard hall of fame for inventing the game. Almost any number of men can play it and the goodfellowship that seems invariably to accompany the game is more important than the gambling part—although, of course, we don't object strenuously if we win.

It is the only form of gambling that many men indulge in. Men who ban the race tracks and abhor draw poker will risk 25 cents in a Kelly pool game. But it is a mild form of gambling—you'd have to work like all possessed to lose \$3.75 at Kelly.

The poor pool or billiard player has a better chance in Kelly than in any other game played in the billiard hall. It is a game of luck rather than science—they call the skill of the billiardist "science"—although in the long run, of course, the expert player may have some advantage.

The psychology of Kelly ought to be an interesting study for Prof. Munsterberg. It has the fascination of a combination golf links, Sam Lloyd puzzle, and a Monte Carlo. To us the fascination of golf is in our poor playing. We play one round, and, although disgusted with our poor showing, are perfectly satisfied that next time we will do better. Likewise in Kelly the loser always is sure that next time he will make some fine shots.

It is a puzzling game. Various problems are presented with each shot, which are solved with more or less success—generally without on our part. But the puzzle interests one.