

A HISTORY OF
TENNIS

BY

E. B. NOEL

AND

J. O. M. CLARK

VOLUME II



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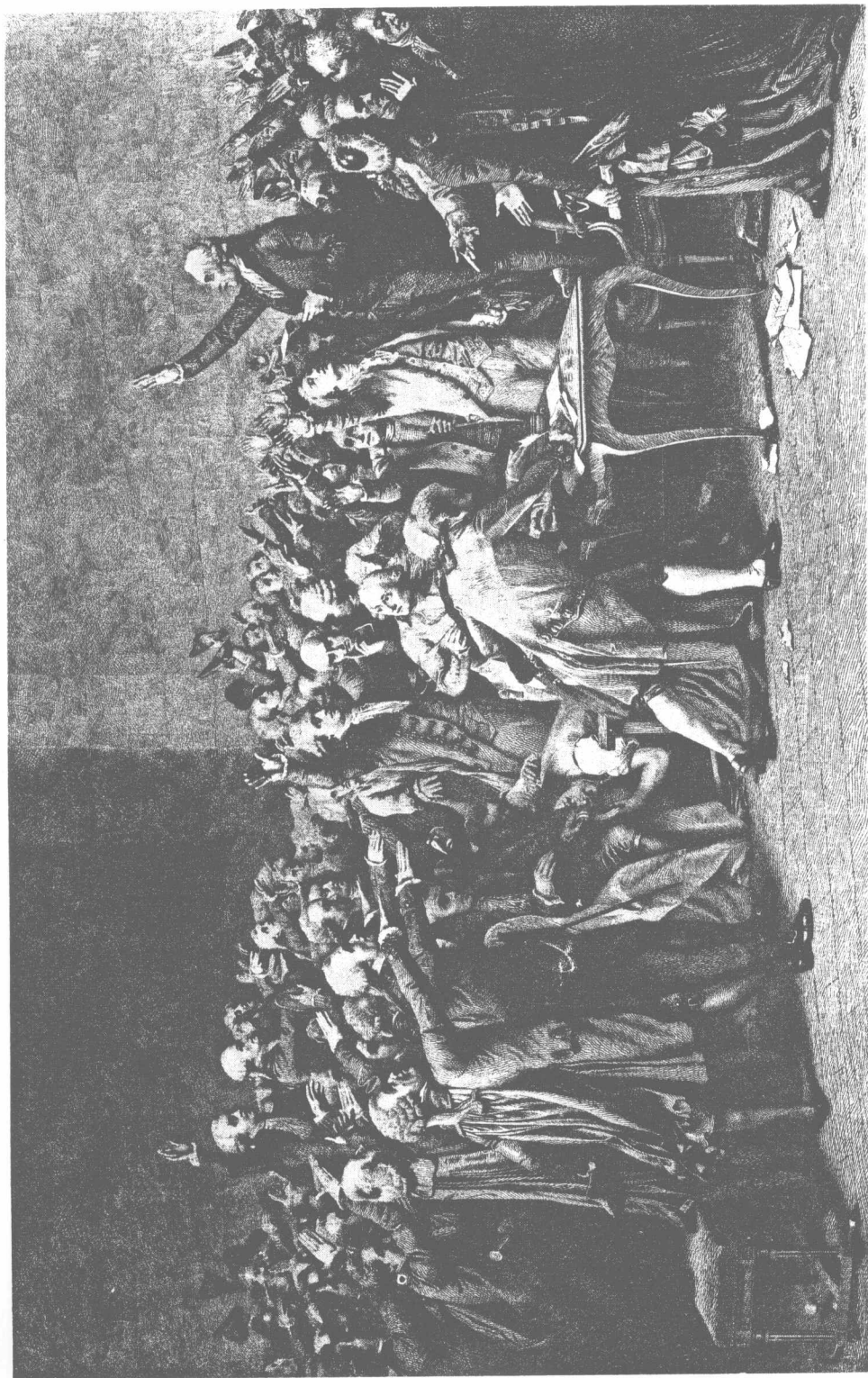
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SERMENT DE JEU DE PAUME AT VERSAILLES

PART IX
THE LITERATURE OF TENNIS

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THE LITERATURE OF TENNIS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

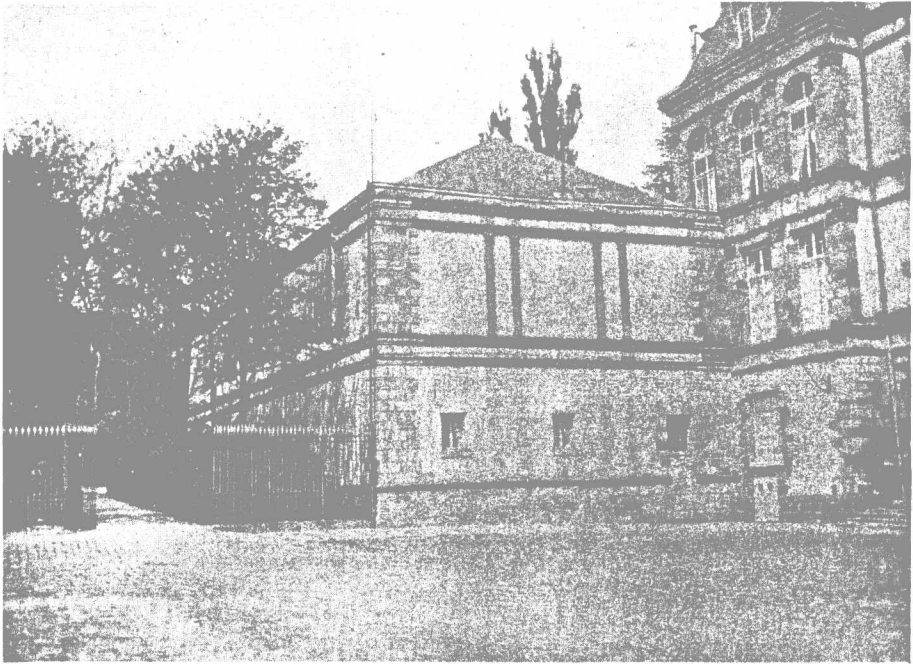
OF all games and pastimes of any standing and antiquity, there is none probably so widely mentioned in the literature of the past as Tennis, but few to which a smaller number of books are entirely devoted either in past or present times.

To some of the very numerous references to Tennis in past times we shall refer in a later chapter. They occur in divers and sundry works. The actual books devoted entirely or largely to the game number no more than eighteen, the earliest being in 1555 and the most recent in 1912. The earliest is the only one in the Italian language; there are nine, varying in date from 1599 to 1898, in French; there are eight in English, varying in date from 1822 to 1912, one being published in Tasmania and one in America, but both being written by Englishmen—only eighteen books in all or an average of one in about twenty years.

It is rather curious that in the greatest age of the game, the seventeenth century, only one book was written on Tennis, in 1632, and then for one hundred and thirty-five years no further book wholly devoted to the game appeared.

No book whatever on Tennis appeared until 1822 in English.

All the early books on the game are now extremely scarce or practically unobtainable, and indeed no book on Tennis is commonly met with until we come to quite modern days.



EXTERIOR OF FONTAINEBLEAU COURT



MR. JULIAN MARSHALL

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the point where the ball stopped rolling to marking it at the second bound) may fairly be said to mark the birth of modern tennis. Scaino himself actually gives us the method then in vogue of cutting the ball, and the passage where he gives a description of the ball and racquet is most interesting.

The interest in the two books which followed is mainly in the rules of the games, and they are most valuable, for one can see how far the principles laid down in 1599, when the first of these works appeared, still remain.

The little book of 1599 is entitled *L'Utilité qui provient du Jeu de la Paume au Corps et à l'Esprit*. 'Traduit du Grec de Galen en Français avec une déclaration de deux doutes qui se trouvent en comptant le jeu de la Paume, le tout depuis augmenté des raisons aux difficultés qui peuvent advenir jouant à icelui avec les règles du jeu de prix.

' Par Forbet l'Aîné, Maestre en cet exercice.

' A Monsieur le Comte d'Auvergne, Paris, chez Thomas Sevestre, 1599.'

To Forbet then the tennis world owes a great debt, for furnishing the basis of our present laws.

The laws made in 1592 and written in 1599 were printed by C. Hulpeau in 1632 and reprinted in 1659 in *La Maison Académique*, a French treatise on games which was reissued in a long series of editions under the titles of *La Maison de Jeux Académiques*, *Académie Universelle des Jeux*, &c., up to the end of the eighteenth century and which all contained these same laws slavishly copied.

Hulpeau's book was entitled *Le Jeu Royal de la Paulme*, and it is fully described in two modern books on Tennis, namely Mr. Julian Marshall's *Annals of Tennis*, 1878, and *La Paume et le Lawn Tennis*, by E. de Nanteuil, G. de Saint-Clair, and Biboché, published by Hachette in 1898. Both of these books also reproduce an interesting view of a court at this period.

There are two sets of rules headed as follows :

1. Ordonnances du Royal et Honorable Jeu de la Paume, parangon entre tous autres jeux et exercices, contenant vingt-quatre articles par lesquels sont donnez à entendre les différentes difficultés qui peuvent advenir en jouant à icelui, principalement en parties. Faites à Paris en l'an 1592.

2. Les Formes tenues et observées par les anciens maîtres du Royal et Honorable jeu de la Paume lorsqu'il se joue en prix.

Hulpeau also gives his ideas on the mode of scoring, and he makes the most interesting remark that, even in his time, the scoring had been done from time immemorial by the 'quinze'.

It was not until 1767—one hundred and thirty-five years later—that the next book appeared, and it forms one of the most important links with past and modern Tennis. The book was termed *L'Art du Paumier-Raquettier et de la Paume*, MDCCLXVII, and was adopted by the Académie Royale.¹ The author was M. de Garsault. The interest in the book lies mainly in the very accurate description of courts of the time given by M. de Garsault, showing almost exactly how the court of that day—very similar, indeed, in dimension to a modern court—was shaped and planned. But there were then two forms of court, of which one, the Jeu Quarré,² with the side and grille penthouse, no longer exists. The other is the Jeu de Dedans, and, from de Garsault's description, a *jeu de dedans* was practically the same as a French court is now.

De Garsault mentions the hazard, so well known in modern times, the winning gallery, and also mentions the chase lines painted on the floor. We have seen that there have been chases since Scaino's day and before, but the system of marking them by lines on the floor, and also the introduction of the winning gallery, lay probably somewhere between the time of Hulpeau, who mentions neither, and the date when a plan appeared in a book by a German writer, Franciscus Philippus Florinus, 1719,³ where a court is shown with chase lines marked.⁴

We now pass on to M. de Man . . . eux's book published seventeen

¹ Mr. Clark and Mr. Noel are among the few collectors who have a copy of de Garsault's book. It is excessively rare.

² The two courts which most nearly approach the Jeu Quarré are that at Falkland Palace and that in Vienna.

³ Mr. Noel's attention was drawn to this book by Mr. Philipp Heineken of Brooklyn, who has made deep researches into the history of Tennis and ball games. We are indebted to him for much information.

⁴ In a book entitled *The Academy of Armory* by Randle Holme, 1688, which we shall discuss later, there appears in a description of Tennis the following: 'Distances are six figures made on the ground on the service side a yard asunder: on the other side there are only two figures besides the galleries.'

years after De Garsault's, and though it adds little to the history of the development of the game, it is most interesting, for here for the first time we get a real amount of information of the names, the courts, and the play of the chief amateurs and paumiers. It is the first human document, if we may so call it, on Tennis. Among players of his day or earlier, M. de Man . . . eux mentions the professionals: Clergé, Farolais, La Fosse, Barneon, Barcellon père, about 1740-1753, and he eulogizes their play, especially that of Clergé, and later on of Pierre Barcellon the younger, Bergeron, Masson, and Charrier.

In 1800 there appeared the first book on Tennis by a great professional player of the day, Pierre Barcellon the younger. The book is entitled *Règles et Principes de Paume*, à Paris chez l'auteur, Rue du Seine No. 1442, ou Mazarine 1580 de l'Imprimerie de Delance, An. 8, 1800.'

This little book contains a number of hints on the game of a practical nature. Barcellon has a discourse on style in the course of which he makes the statement, 'that true grace is nothing more than facility of movement.'

This book is now rare, but one can obtain copies of it now and then.