

PIQUET.

HISTORICAL.

Numerous theories have been broached as to the origin, invention, and etymology of Piquet, but none of them seem satisfactory.

According to the Abbé Bullet (*Recherches sur les Cartes à jouer*, Lyon, 1757,) the word Piquet is derived from the Celtic language. *Piquo*, in Celtic, signifies to choose, and *pic* and *repic* (the old spelling of pique and repique) have the sense of doubled and redoubled. The ancient name of the point, *ronfle*, Bullet compounds of two Celtic words — *rum*, a gathering together, and *bell* (in composition, *fell*), a combat; hence *rumfell*, *rumfle*, *ronfle*, an assemblage of cards of the same suit. *Ronfle* probably comes from *Ronfa*, one of the earliest Italian games known; mentioned by Berni (*Capitolo del Gioco della Primavera*, 1526,) and also in Rabelais' list, as *la Ronfle*. *Capot*, Bullet says, signifies in Celtic, balked of one's expectation.

Prior to the appearance of his "*Recherches*," the Abbé was engaged on a Celtic dictionary, and he refers nearly all words of doubtful etymology to Celtic. The coincidences he points out are more curious than valuable.

Haydn ("Dictionary of Dates"), giving Mézéray as his authority, says that Piquet was the first known game on the cards (this, however, is not the fact), and that it was invented by Joquemin for the amusement of Charles VI. of France (1390). There is no such name as Joquemin to be found in any of the biographies. The person referred to is no doubt Jacquemin Gringonneur, to whom is erroneously ascribed the invention of playing cards in the reign of Charles VI. Some authorities are of opinion that Jacquemin was the name of a cardmaker, or *gringonneur* of that period, *gringonneur* signifying a maker of *grangons* (*certus tesserarum ludus*. Du Cange, Glossary, Supplement, Vol. II., col. 651). Persius ("*Rouge et Noir*. The Academicians of 1823, London, 1823"), adds that a ballet, executed at the Court of Charles VI., suggested the idea of Piquet, and gives a description of the ballet, which, however, has no similarity to Piquet. He further states it to be probable that the game bears the name of its inventor.

It so happens that numeral cards, with which Piquet is played, were not known at the time of Charles VI.

Other conjectures regarding Piquet are to be found in the *Mémoire sur l'Origine du Jeu de Piquet, trouvé*

dans l'Histoire de France, sous le Règne de Charles VII.," by Le Père Daniel; printed in the *Journal de Trévoux*, for May, 1720.

According to Daniel, Piquet is a symbolic, allegorical, military, political, and historical game. From the names of historical personages on the court cards of early French packs, and from the marks of the suits, the Père believed that he had made out the origin of Piquet, which he supposed to have been devised about 1430, in the reign of Charles VII. Chatto, a very careful writer and sound critic ("*Facts and Speculations on the Origin and History of Playing Cards*, London, 1848,") speaks of Daniel's theories as "mere gratuitous conceits," and as the seethings of the father's imagination.

Leber, following the wake of Father Daniel (whom, however he well abuses), in his "*Études historiques sur les Cartes à jouer* (Paris, 1842)" assigns a French origin of about the same period to Piquet. Chatto remarks on Leber's historical studies, "Though M. Leber has freely censured Daniel * * * yet he is exceedingly prone to follow Daniel's example; and though his explanation of the symbolical meaning of cards be less extravagant than the latter's account of the origin and signification of the game of Piquet, it can scarcely be called more reasonable."

In "*Les Cartes à jouer et la Cartomancie, par P. Boiteau d'Ambly* (Hachette, Paris, 1854)," there is a good deal of speculation about Piquet.

The work was translated into English, and reprinted with additions, under the title of "The History of

Playing Cards. Edited by the Revd. Ed. S. Taylor, B.A., and others. London: Hotten, 1865." The following abstract is taken from the translation.

The author believes that, as numeral cards were known in the time of Charles VII., the formation of the game of Piquet was connected with that period (1422).

"It seems hardly possible," he says, "to conceive that the game and the cards with which it was played were invented all at once. * * * During the hundred years between 1350 and 1450 more than one modification of the ancient cards must have escaped us. * * * It is the opinion of some that there existed an intermediate game between the Southern and German Tarot and the French Piquet; but of this there are no traces, just as none exist of the process by which the invention of Piquet was completed. It will not do to say, therefore, with M. Paul Lecroix, that we owe the game of Piquet to La Hire [the famous Stephen de Vignoles, a devoted adherent of Charles VII.], or rather to one of his subordinates. * * * It will not do, in fact, to accept the pretended explanations of the learned of the last century, which are, in general, nothing else but wretched guesses (*mauvaises conjectures*). It would be, in all probability, at the fêtes at Chinon, where Charles VII. so gaily ruined his kingdom; or at Paris, when victory once more smiled on him, that the gallant and warlike court of this king * * * devised and worked out the new system of cards. * * * France was acquainted with the Tarot in the second half of the fourteenth

century. * * * The use of cards became general; and it was then that France set herself to assimilate these cards to her peculiar genius, a task which resulted in the invention of Piquet, by a simplification of the original elements. The marks of the suits, and the number of the cards, as well as the enactment of the fundamental laws of this game date from the middle of the reign of Charles VII., which coincides with the middle of the fifteenth century. It is at this exact period that the history of cards is involved in the greatest obscurity, although the invention of the French game is the most important element in it."

Boiteau admits that the origin of Piquet and of numeral (as distinguished from Tarot) cards, is wrapped in the greatest obscurity, and further on that "The French would hardly have effected such an alteration in the implements of play unless a corresponding reform in the method of playing had been already in progress." He then says, "It is *assumed*, therefore, that the alteration was consequent on the invention of Piquet." One may safely, after such admissions, consign Boiteau's theory to the region of guesses.

The "*Dictionnaire Universel* (1854)" echoes the view taken by Daniel, Boiteau, and others. "Piquet was invented, so it is said, in the reign of Charles VII. [of France]."

Equally untenable is the supposition of Grosley, ("*Mémoires historiques et critiques pour l'Histoire de Troyes*, 1774,") who asserts that the game of Piquet was the invention of a mathematician of Troyes, who

lived in the reign of Louis XIII. (1620), and whose name was Picquet.

Strutt, "Sports and Pastimes (1801)," also refers the introduction of Piquet into France to the middle of the seventeenth century.

These writers, however, have overlooked the fact that a century earlier Piquet is included by Rabelais in the list of games played by Gargantua (*circa* 1530-45). It has been stated, but for no apparent reason, that the Piquet mentioned by Rabelais is a different game.

Rabelais, probably the earliest writer who mentions Piquet, also includes in his list the game of *Cent*, a game all but identical with Piquet, if one may judge from passages (chiefly found in old plays), where the game of *Cent* is the subject of conversation. *Cent* is clearly derived from the Spanish name of the game, *Cientos* or hundred, "the number of points that win the game" (Strutt).

It has been agreed, by most authorities, that Piquet is of French origin. It seems to the writer more probable that Piquet was derived originally from Germany. M. Merlin (*Origine des Cartes à jouer*, Paris, 1869), says that the composition of the ancient German cards *Schwerter Karte* resembles that of modern Piquet packs, and is of opinion that there is an analogy between Piquet and this *jeu à l'épée*. It is possible, too, that this analogy may explain the etymology of Piquet so much disputed. The sword of the Italian and Spanish cards is equivalent to the *pique* or spade of the French cards. What more

likely than that *Piquet* is the French name of the *Schwerter* (or sword) game? It has often been suspected that Piquet is in some way connected with *pique*, but for what reason has never been clearly made out.

Neither Piquet nor *Cent* are mentioned by Shakespeare. And it is somewhat remarkable that though *Cent* frequently occurs in English books of the Shakesperian period, Piquet seldom, if ever, does, from which one may conclude that *Cent* was played in England until about the middle of the seventeenth century, when the word *Cent* went out of use, and was replaced by the word Piquet.

In Nares' "Glossary of Words in Works of English Authors of the Time of Shakespeare," *Cent* and many other games find a place, but Piquet does not appear.

The change from *Cent* to Piquet in England may be regarded as one of name only, and may perhaps be thus accounted for. In 1625 Charles I. married the daughter of Henry IV. of France. From the time of the marriage of Mary with Philip of Spain (1554) the English equivalent of the Spanish name of the game was in vogue; but when a French Princess came on the scene, the French name, Piquet, was contemporaneously substituted for the Spanish name *Cientos*, or *Cent*.

Nares informs us that *Cent* was sometimes corrupted into *Saint*, *Sant*, *Saunt*, *Sent*, and *Mount-cent* or *Mount-saint*, and quotes passages in which various spellings obtain. A few quotations from writers of

the period (1575 to 1650) where Cent occurs may prove of interest.

One of the earliest references to Cent is to be met with in Turberville's "Book of Faulconrie (1575)"—

"At coses or at Saunt to sit,
Or set their rest at prime."

In the "Book of Howshold Charges and other Paiments laid out by L[ord] North and his Commandment" (printed in the "Archæologia," Vol. XIX.), there are several entries of losses at play. In the entry, 1578, May 15 to 17, there occurs "Lost at Saint, xv.s."

This is interesting, as showing that at that time Cent was a fashionable game, and played at court, Lord North used frequently to play with the Queen, and there are several entries of money lost to her, but the names of the games are omitted.

In Minsheu's "Pleasant and delightfull Dialogues, Spanish and English" (London, 1599), the game is called Mount Sant. In the third Dialogue between "five gentlemen friendes," Rodricke, Sir Lorenzo and Mendoza converse thus:—

"R. Here are the cards. What shall we play at?

* * * * *

L. At Mount Sant.

M. It makes my head to be in a swoune to be alwaies counting."

In "A Woman kilde with Kindnesse," a play, by

Thomas Heywood, acted before the year 1604, Cent is called Saint: "Husband, shall we play at Saint?" and in Gervas Markham's "Famous ——— or Noble Curtezan (1609)," Cent is called Mount-cent:—

"Were it Mount-cent, primero, or at chesse,
I wan with most, and lost still with the lesse."

In Taylor's "Motto (1621)" Cent, under the spelling Sant, is enumerated among the games at which the prodigal "flings his money free with carelessness":—

"Ruffe, Slam, Trump, Nody, Whisk, Hole, Sant, New Cut."

In the "Annalia Dubrensis. Upon the yerely celebration of Mr. Robert Dover's Olimpick games upon Cotswold Hills (1636)," a very rare book of which a copy is preserved in the Grenville Library, contributed to by thirty-two authors of the period, including Michael Drayton, Ben Jonson, Trussell, and others of less note, the game is spelt Cent. In the eulogium on Dover by William Denny this passage occurs:—

"Cent for those gentry, who their states have marr'd,
That game befits them, for they must discard."

This shows that discarding was part of the game.

Sir William Davenant, Poet Laureate after Ben Jonson, in "The Witts, a Comedy present'd at the

Private House in Black Fryers (1636)," spells the game Sent.

"While their glad sons are left seven for their chance
At hazard : hundred and all made at Sent."

The inference is that "Sent" was played a hundred up.

The following quotation from "The Discovery of a most Exquisite Jewel, found in the Kennel of Worcester Streets, the Day after the Fight" (1651), by Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty, shows that the name of the game was sometimes anglicised into Hundred: "Verily I think they make use of Kings as we do of card Kings in playing at the Hundred; any one whereof, if there be appearance of a better game without him (and that the exchange of him for another incoming card is likely to conduce more for drawing the stake), is by good gamesters without any ceremony discarded."

There is further evidence that the game of Cent was so called from its being played a hundred up.

In 1656 was published a little book entitled "The Scholer's Practicall Cards," by F. Jackson, M.A. The book is chiefly occupied with instructions how to spell, write, cypher, and cast accounts, by means of cards. Several games are mentioned in it, and among them Saunt which the author explains by *centum*, a hundred.

Again, in "The Dumb Knight," a play by Lewis Machin (history and date unknown) but *circa* middle of seventeenth century), there is a direct statement

that the name of the game was derived from a hundred. The play also contains, in punning allusions to the love affairs of two of the characters, important materials for establishing the great similarity of Cent to Piquet.

"Enter aloft to cards the Queen and Phylocles.

Q. Come, my Lord, take your place, here are cards, and here are my crowns.

P. And here are mine; at what game will your Majesty play?

Q. At Mount-Saint.

P. A royal game, and worthy of the name
And meetest even for Saints to exercise;
Sure it was of a woman's first invention.

Q. It is not Saint, but Cent, taken from hundreds.

P. True, for 'mongst millions hardly is found one saint.

Q. Indeed you may allow a double game.

But come, lift for the dealing: it is my chance to deal.

P. An action most, most proper to your sex.

* * * * *

Q. What are you, my Lord?

P. Your highness' servant, but misfortune's slave.

Q. Your game, I mean.

P. Nothing in show, yet somewhat in account:
Madam, I am blank.

Q. You are a double game, and I am no less.
There's an hundred, and all cards made but one knave.

* * * * *

What's your game now?

P. Four king's, as I imagine.

Q. Nay, I have two, yet one doth me little good.

P. Indeed, mine are two queens, and one I'll throw away.

* * * * *

P. Can you decard, madam?

Q. Hardly, but I must do hurt."

Here the mention of showing, of the blank (*carte blanche*), of double games, of four kings, of throwing away, and of the decard (discard), prove to demonstration the likeness of Cent to Piquet.

One of the first English writers (if not the earliest) who refers to Piquet under its new name is John Hall, in his "Horæ Vacivæ" (1646). He says:—"For Cardes, the Philologil of them is not for an essay; a man's fancy would be sum'd up at Cribbage; Gleeke requires a vigilant memory: Maw, a pregnant agility; Picket a various invention; Primero, a dexterous kinde of rashness."

Later on, Piquet is frequently met with in English books.

In 1659 a curious pamphlet (now rare) was published, entitled—"Shuffling, Cutting, and Dealing in a game at Pickquet, being acted from the year 1653, to 1658, by O[liver] P[rotector] and others; with great applause." It contains numerous puns on the terms used at Piquet, such as throwing out the best cards and getting none but a company of wretched ones.

The following passage from this pamphlet confirms the idea that Cent and Piquet were similar games:—"I got more the last game, when I plaid *Cent*: for I had a hundred, and all made."

In "Flora's Vagaries," a comedy printed in 1670, Piquet is introduced:—

GRIMANI. Well, lay by your work, we will have a game at cards. Giacomo, go fetch some cards and counters, picket you play well at.

OTRANTE [his daughter]. I am no Gamester, but if you please to play—

* * * * *

GRI. Sit down, come, lift, I deal. How many take you in?

OTR. I take seven, Sir.

GRI. Take them and I will have all the rest. So now, what say you to the point?

OTR. A little game, some three-and-fifty.

GRI. 'Tis good, hunch out.

OTR. Quart major.

GRI. And that too.

* * * * *

OTR. Three kings.

GRI. No, that's not good.

OTR. Nine, and there's ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen.

GRI. I had forgot my aces.

* * * * *

OTR. You have lost you aces, fourteen.

The action of the play then causes the game to stop.

It is interesting to observe that the game was marked with counters, and that the mode of play was as now, except that the pack was composed of thirty-six cards, otherwise Otrante could not take seven cards, and could not have a point of fifty-three, as with a thirty-two card pack this point cannot be made. (See pp. 22-24, for an account of the old mode of playing.)

A little later Piquet is mentioned by Dryden, Prior, Wycherley, Pope, and in "The Spectator." The passages quoted below tend to show that Piquet was

a well-known game in England at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century.

"If I go to picquet, tho' it be but with a novice in't he will picque and repicque and capot me twenty times together."—DRYDEN, in "Sir Martin Marr-All, or the feign'd Innocence (1697)."

"She commonly went up at ten
Unless piquet was in the way."

—PRIOR, "The Dove."
[End of seventeenth century.]

"In Courts, as at picquet, a shuffling King,
Does the top cards oft to the bottom bring;
And in Courts too, as at picquet, we've seen
Good cards discarded, and worse taken in."

—WYCHERLEY.
[Beginning of eighteenth century.]

In Pope's "Moral Epistle" the character of Lord Godolphin (*d.* 1712) is sketched. It appears that he piqued himself more on his skill in gaming than on his political reputation, and that Piquet was one of his accomplishments.

"His pride is in piquette,
Newmarket fame, and judgment in a bet."

And a few years later Piquet is referred to in the "Spectator:"—"Instead of entertaining themselves at ombre or piquet, they would wrestle and pitch the bar."

In 1719 appeared Thomas D'Urfey's celebrated poems "Wit and Mirth: or Pills to purge Melancholy."

The first volume contains "A Poole at Piquette, The Words made and set to a Tune, by Mr. D'Urfey, made at Ramsbury Mannor."

"Within an Arbour of delight,
As sweet as Bowers Elisian
Where famous *Sidney* us'd to write
I lately had a Vision:
Methought beneath a Golden State,
The Turns of Chance obeying,
Six of the World's most noted great,
At *Piquette* were a playing.

"The first two were the brave *Eugene*
With *Vendosme* Battle waging;
The next a Nymph who to be Queen,
Her *Mounsieur* was Engaging;
The *Fleur de Lis* Old *Maintenon*
With sanctified *Carero*;
And next above the scarlet *Don*,
Queen ANNE, and *Gallick Nero*.

"The Game between the Martial braves,
Was held in diff'rent Cases;
The French man got Quatorze of Knaves,
But Prince *Eugene* four Aces:
And tho' the 'tothers eldest Hand
Gave Hopes to make a Jest on't,
Yet now the Point who soonest gain'd
Could only get the best on't.

"From them I turned mine Eyes to see
The Church man and the Lady,
And found her pleas'd to high degree
Her Fortune had been steady,
The Saints that cram'd the *Spanish* Purse
She hop'd would all oblige her,
For he had but a little *Terse*
When she produc'd *Quint-Major*.

“And now betwixt the *King* and *Queen*
 An Empire was depending ;
 Within whose mighty Game was seen
 The Art of State-contending :
 The *Monsieur* had three Kings to win't
 And was o'er *Europe* roaming,
 But her full Point *Quatorze* and *Quint*
 Won all and left him foaming.”

In the time of Anne (1702), card-playing was the rage in every part of civilised Europe. In England it was both fashionable and popular, then and during the greater portion of the Georgian Era, Ombre being, according to Chatto, the favourite game with ladies, Piquet with gentlemen *par excellence*, the middle classes preferring Whist, and the lower orders patronising All-fours, Put, Cribbage, and Lanterloo (Loo). Piquet was chiefly played by club men. In Walpole's Letters (Vol. II., p. 315,) a story is told of Selwyn's walking into White's, in November, 1752, where he found James Jeffries playing Piquet with Sir Edward Falkener, who was, at that time, Joint Postmaster-General. “Oh,” quoth Selwyn, “he is now robbing the mail !”

About the middle of the eighteenth century Bath was the head-quarters of fashionable card-playing, and Piquet was one of the games indulged in. A notorious gambler, named Lookup, used to play there a great deal up to the time of his death in 1770. He won large sums of Lord Chesterfield, chiefly at Piquet, and with his winnings built some houses at Bath, which he jocularly called “Chesterfield Row.”

Though Piquet was much played in the clubs and

at Bath, it never appears in this country to have been the game of the masses, as it is in France. The Bath play continued until about the year 1840, a *coterie* of distinguished Piquet players constantly meeting there during the early part of the present century ; and the club play continued at White's and Graham's. When the Bath play declined, and Graham's club was broken up, Piquet pretty well died out in England, almost the only place where it was regularly played being the Portland Club. Recently Piquet has revived ; though even now it can scarcely be called a popular game.

The literature of Piquet furnishes some additional materials for its history, more especially as regards the way in which it was formerly played.

The earliest work on Piquet extant is probably “*Le Royal Jeu de Piquet plaisant et recreatif. Reueu et corrigé en cette derniere Edition, pour le Contentement de ceux qui font Profession d'en observer les Regles. Rouen* (1647).” This is not the first edition, but is the only one in the British Museum. It was translated into English in 1651, with the following title :—“The Royall and delightfull game of Piquet written in French and now rendred into English out of the last French edition. London. Printed for J. Martin and J. Ridley, and are to be sold at the Castle in Fleet-street nere Ram alley.”

The following is the translation of the preface :—

“There comming to my hands, not long since, a small Treatise, concerning the game of PICQUET, and having perused the same ; I have since thought fit to communicate

it to the World; as being a game approved of everywhere, especially among the Gentry, and persons of Honour. It is a kind of Diversion, so sweet, and pleasing, as that it makes the hours slide away insensibly: it easeth the Gouty person; clears up the melancholicke spirit; and refresheth the pensive Lover. These considerations are of sufficient force to put in any one a desire to the Play: But that which should most stir you up to the purchasing of this Booke, is, that you have here laid downe before you, an absolute, and exact account of the whole Game, and have all the difficulties, that may arise therein, fully resolved. If you therefore but observe the Rules and Maximes here delivered; you shall avoid all the quarrells, which usually arise amongst Gamesters, for want of being thoroughly informed in the Game; and shall preserve mutuall Society, which is the Bond that unites all things. Be sure, therefore, that you purchase this Booke: For in so doing, you shall not only much advantage your selves, but me also."

According to this treatise the game was played with thirty-six cards, the sixes remaining in the pack; the set or number up was a matter of agreement, but was usually fixed at a hundred, it being "in the choice of the Gamesters to make it more or lesse." In cutting for deal, more than one card must be "lifted," as the top one might be known by the back. In this remark we have the reason for several of the severe rules which obtain at Piquet, such, for instance, as allowing no change of discard after touching—not looking at, but touching—the stock. In former days, when cards were not so well manufactured as now, it is easy to understand that a pack might frequently contain marked cards, and, therefore, no

one was allowed even to touch the stock without penalty.

In cutting for deal, "whichsoever of the two dips the least card" deals. The deal was either by two at a time, or by three or four at a time, to each player, at the option of the dealer; but he was bound to continue dealing through the game as he began, or, at least, to announce, before the cut, that he would change his method. The same object is apparent here as before, viz., that no advantage should be taken of a marked card. In England the practice is always to deal by two at a time; in France the deal may be by two or three at the option of the dealer, but, now-a-days, not by four. Twelve cards were given to each player, and twelve were left in the stock, of which the elder hand might take eight, the younger, four; each player was bound to discard one card. With thirty-six cards it was possible for both players to hold a *carte blanche*, and this case is provided for, the two annulling each other. The pique and repique are spelt *picq* and *repicq*. The point was called the ruffe, in the French Treatise, *ronfle*. The description of the way of counting the point explains why points ending in a four count one less than the number of cards. The point was not formerly reckoned by cards but by tens (*dixaines*); and "For every Ten that he can reckon, he is to set up One. As, for example, for Thirty, he is to reckon Three, for Fourty, Foure: and so upward. Where, by the way, it is to be noted, that you are to reckon as much for Thirty five as for Forty; and as much for Forty five as for Fifty: and so of the rest: but

for thirty six, thirty seven, Thirty eight, or Thirty nine, you are to reckon no more than for Thirty five: in like manner as for Thirty one, Thirty two, Thirty three or Thirty four, you are to reckon no more than for Thirty." When the game came to be played with thirty-two cards, points ending in a two or in a three could no longer be held, but those ending in a four could, and, the old method of reckoning being continued, it seemed as though a point ending in a four was an arbitrary exception to the rule of reckoning one for each card.

A curious expression is used in respect of the highest sequence making good all lower ones in the same hand, notwithstanding the adversary may hold intermediate ones. The best sequence is said to "drown" all the sequences held by the opponent. Cards under a ten did not reckon in play. It seems that in Paris it was permitted to amend incorrect calls of point or sequence, but not in Provence or Languedoc, where "the First word is alwaies to stand."

A few years later was published "*La Maison Académique* (Paris, 1659), in which appears "*Le Jeu dv Picquet*" as then played. The general directions for play are almost identical with those in "*Le Royal Jeu dv Piquet*."

"Wits Interpreter: the English Parnassus. Third Edition, with many additions by 'J. C.' (1671)," contains in one part, "Games and Sports now us'd at this day among the Gentry of England, &c." Under "The Ingenious game called Picket" are directions

for playing, generally resembling those given in "The Royall and delightful game of Picquet."

The directions for play given in Cotton's "Compleat Gamester (1674)" are very similar to those in the earlier treatises.

The "*Académie Universelle des Jeux*" contains Piquet; and all the numerous editions give it the first place among the card games. The work has been translated into English under the title of "The Academy of play, containing a full description of; and the laws of play now observed in the several academies of Paris, relative to the following games [here follow the names of thirty-three card games]. From the French of the Abbé Bellecour. London Printed for F. Newbery, the Corner of St. Paul's Churchyard, Ludgate Street" (no date).

The description both in the English and the various French editions from 1659 to the present day is very similar to that already given in the abstract from "*Le Royal Jeu dv Piquet*." The only changes of importance are that thirty-two cards are substituted for thirty-six, and consequently that the number taken after discarding is five instead of eight elder hand, and three instead of four younger hand: that the *ronfle* or ruffe is called the point; that sometimes every card of the point is allowed to count; and that all cards count in play (though in some editions the counting of cards below a ten is optional).

The changes in the mode of play were introduced about the end of the seventeenth century, as appears from "The Compleat Gamester," (1709). After

stating that the twos, threes, fours, and fives are thrown out, this edition adds, in a note, "These were the Rules of the Game when it was play'd with the sixes, but however the Rules hold for the Game as it is play'd at present without the Sixes, only when it is play'd without the Sixes the Elder Hand is to take Five of the Eight Cards in the Stock."

The origin of the proverb that "Piquet is not a game of surprise"—a saying not always true of the game—is to be found in the old treatises. It refers mainly to changing the suit when playing the cards:—

"L'on observera que, comme il n'y a point de surprise [in playing the cards] au jeu de Piquet, celui qui en jouant ses cartes change de couleur, doit nommer la couleur dont-il joue: faute de quoi, celui qui aurait fourni, comptant qu'il continuerait à jouer de la couleur dont-il jouait auparavant, serait en droit de reprendre la carte jétée, quand même elle serait de la couleur jouée."

In the "Court Gamester," by Seymour (1719), afterwards amalgamated with the "Compleat Gamester," the general scheme is as before. There are some quaint remarks peculiar to this treatise which deserve quotation. Speaking of tierces and other sequences, Seymour observes "These Terms may sound a little like conjuring, to Persons that don't understand them; but they are only the *French* Terms that we make use of, because we have not *English* whereby to express the same thing in one Word." Further on, after explaining the annulling of small sequences by large ones, he adds, "Thus, among Cards as well as Men, the Great still overcome the Small."

The directions are repeated in seven editions up to 1750; in the fifth edition it is stated that "Piquet is now become so common that even the meanest people have become instructed, and let into all the Tricks and Secrets of it." This, however, seems doubtful, unless by the meanest people such players as Lookup and other professionals are intended. In the eighth edition (1754) a number of Hoyle's rules and cases are plagiarised.

The last work of any importance is Hoyle's "Short Treatise on the Game of Piquet (1744)." This, though written in a somewhat obscure style, contains much valuable instruction, and also the laws of the game, which have been the only authority in this country ever since the short treatise appeared. Hoyle's laws were twenty-six in number, and are all observed by strict players. Editors of Hoyle, however, subsequent to 1800, have taken the liberty of adding nine other laws on their own account. These added laws have no weight, and, in several instances, the practice of club players is opposed to them.

Hoyle does not fix the number the game is to be played up, probably because it was still a matter of agreement in his day. His editors, however, in copies published after Hoyle's death, say the game is a hundred-and-one up. *Piquet au cent* is played a hundred-and-one up in some parts of France at the present day; but the practice in this country, and in Paris when *parties* are played, is to make the game a hundred up.

It is somewhat remarkable that so fine a game as

Piquet should have been almost entirely neglected by writers on games from 1744 to 1873 (nearly a hundred-and-thirty years), except by editors of Hoyle, who have, as a rule, only succeeded in introducing errors. This is the more singular, as it is generally admitted that Hoyle's laws and directions for play, though excellent as far as they go, are by no means complete. In the following pages an attempt has been made to supplement Hoyle's work, by giving a full description of the game, and by enlarging more completely on the various points of play.

