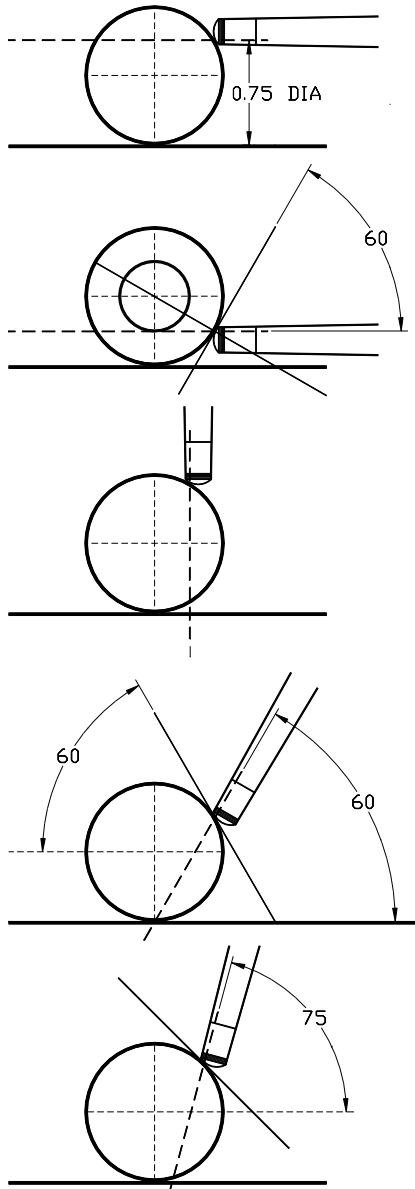


MASSÉS & PIQUÉS



SCREW 1A To hit a qball with zero skidding u hit at 0.70 dia high. In reality that would giv the qball topspin, koz the cue bends/moovs upwards during contact. I sometimes get super topspin, when i hit at say 0.75 dia, ie a ¼ ball abov center.

SCREW 2 A ¼ screw -- the cue iz shown horizontal, which it never iz. The qtip friktion needed iz equivalent to parking on a 30° hill. If u contact the ball outside the ¼ circle in the qtip's view (az shown) then u might misscue.

PIQUÉ 3 A ¼ ball contact with the cue vertical (90°). Angles higher than 45° are classed az piqués, & if there iz some sidespin then they are a massé. When i play at 90° the ball pushes away for 10mm & then reverses & rolls a long way back, depending on how hard i hit it etc.

PIQUÉ 4A If i hit down at 60° i kan make the ball push-out say 100mm & then abruptly stop dead, it duznt matter how hard i hit. If i try it at 55° (not shown) the ball brakes but then rolls on, it duznt matter how hard i hit. If i try it at 65° (not shown) the ball stops & then kums back a bit. And 60° (& ¼ ball) just happens to mean that the line of action passes throo the center/bottom of the ball (az shown).

MAXIMUM

PIQUÉ 4B If i want to maximize the distance that i make the ball go out & still kum back to the start, then 75° iz the angle that i uze. And the harder i hit the further this out & back iz.

SPEAR-GRIP There are 2 basic ways of holding a cue for any stroke -- the ordinary grip, & the spear-grip. With the ordinary grip, u hold the cue the same way, whether the cue iz horizontal, or at 45°, or at 90° (vertical). I uze the ordinary grip up to about 40°, but if i raize the qbutt higher, i hav to switch the grip around & hence hold the cue az if it were a spear. I hold the cue between the thumb & 1 or 2 fingers. The hold iz uzually light, the thumb pressing the cue into the bridge.

WRIST A wristy action iz perhaps the eezyst, for the smaller massés & piqués. But u karnt uze an eezy wristy action unless u uze the spear-grip. If u uze zero arm moovment, & zero hand moovment, & just uze wrist moovment, u might find some strokes eezyr. The wrist karnt follow throo, hence the qtip only nips the ball lightly -- the qtip karnt follow throo to the cloth -- & there iz less chance of landing heavily on the ball. A wrist action iz accurate, the qtip hits the qball where & how intended. A wristy action almost automatically decelerates the qtip at the qball, which thusly let's the cue's weight do the job. Some books say that acceleration iz needed.

J-ACTION With piqués, some players look az if they are going to hit the qball dead center, & uze a big J-action. We all uze a bit of J-action, while praps mooving our

bridge, especially when the qball iz almost touching the first object-ball, & u want to avoid a foul.

FRIKTION The more slippery the bedcloth the eezyer the piqué & the massé. If u rub chalk on the bedcloth u will get allmost zero out & back. If u place the ball on a chalk-mark, & try to play a piqué, u will get little effect, the ball will jam & bounce a bit. The reason we kan play a piqué iz that the qtip to qball friktion iz greater than the qball to bedcloth friktion. That's why u havta chalk-up. And that's why piqués are eezyer on a new slippery cloth. Piqués are eezyer when playing away from the side-cush than when playing away from the top-cush. And even eezyer when playing away from the baulk-cush. The reason iz that the ball-to-bed friktion varys with direction due to the bednap. Friktion iz at a maximum against the nap. Strangely, friktion haz a minimum at 22° & at 68° (00° being the direction of the nap). This iz explained in ch75 Friktion. U should praktis piqués near the baulk-cush, it's eezyer. And if u ruin the bedcloth in baulk then this will worry the committee less than ruining the tott area. Anyhow praps u should praktis on a small piece of spare cloth on top of the bedcloth. The ball iz the main offender, not the qtip.

QTIP ACTION If the qball iz to hav back-spin then az it leevs the ball the qtip should be moving horizontally in the direction of the intended back-spin, in addition to the downward moovment. U should hav a facile action to allow the qtip to moov in the direction it wants to go (ie the direction u want it to go). Even better, help the qtip to do its thing. There are 2 ways. Firstly, u kan apply some torq on the cue with yor grip, to try to help/force the qtip in the dezired direction. Apply this force during the back-swing & forward-swing, & it should manifest during contact. The force neednt be great.

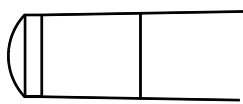
JACK KARNEHM *The cue is pressed very strongly against the thumb of the left hand by leverage exerted from the righthand hold on the butt. Here the righthand thumb pushes hard towards the forefinger, so that if the thumb of the left hand is removed the tip end of the cue will fly up to the ceiling.....*

CUE GRIP Gripping the cue above its center-of-balance givs a smoother swing.

ELBOW The pozzy of yor elbow iz important for inoffs & pots, & also for massé. Take a stance etc that allows u to properly pozition yor (right) elbow, if u kan (often u hav a hardnuff time reeching).

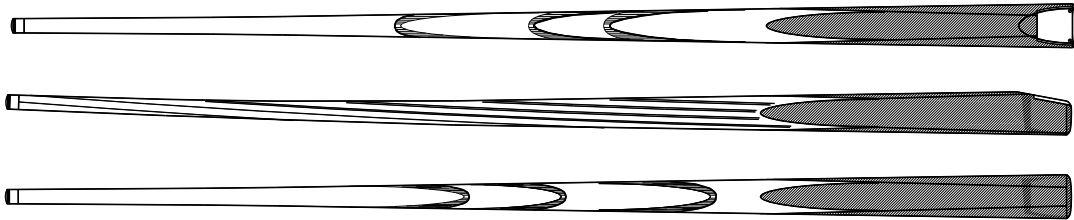
WALLY'S ORDINARY CUE Dolly kindly showed me Wally's 2 cues the other day, they are kept in a leather cuecase gifted to Him by Melbourne Inman. Wally's ordinary cue (for ordinary billiards)(when he died in 1960) woz a short ash 1898 Alcock Champion. Wally's masse' cue woz a very short & heavy maple cue (Dufferin?) with a machine splice.

WALLY'S MASSÉ CUE This woz a maple cue, almost 100mm shorter than his Alcock. It had 4 pretty little pearl-shell inlays. It looked like about 200mm had been cut off the butt of a standard cue. It felt about 18 oz, with weight added in the butt. I wonder if Wally had any weight in the tip end (ie in a hidden drill hole). Such a wt would help to send the qball outbound. It had a reddish fibre ferrule, about 10mm. The cue was not thickish or stiffish, it looked much like any cue in the rack. The tip looked normal, ie not thick nor thin, & neither flat nor very rounded. It looked like a modern Elkmaster or Blue Diamond.



I think that grey chromium tanned leather tips were first made in the 1950's, so Wally's 1960 massé cue might have been old, but the tip was not.

GRAIN-KICK & BEND-KICK Cues are not as stiff across the grain, they bend & kick across the grain on a shot. In addition, a non-straight cue will bend & kick in the bend direction. You can use grain-kick & bend-kick to help screw & piqué. The grain-kick helps topspin if you hold the arrows on top of the cue arrowing away from you. Maple doesn't have a fearsome grain, so I suppose that grain-kick isn't important. Walter's wide-grained ash cue had a few arrows on both sides, & they all pointed away, so I guess that he didn't enjoy/suffer any grain-kick. Plus we help topspin by holding the cue such that the bend-kick is up.



MASSÉ CUE WALLY VERSUS SMITH THE TIMES, NOV 1929

When he had completed the seventh hundred he made a little run-through cannon which resulted in the balls running into a line with the cue ball almost touching the white & the red ball a foot or more away. Lindrum examined the position carefully, looked at the tip of his cue, which had caused him a little uneasiness, & sent for another cue. With this he made a beautiful masse cannon, & then continued the break with the cue in use originally. Without making a mistake, or even the suggestion of one, Lindrum went on to complete this 13th four-figure break of his tour. Towards the end of the break, which realized 1,057, Lindrum made a run of 73 cannons, & then missed a very difficult cannon played off the cushion first.....

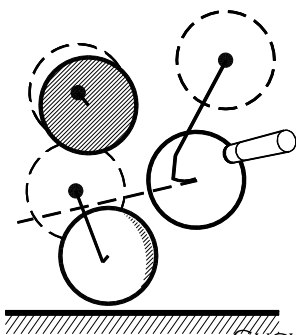
TRIPOD BRIDGE You use a fingertip (tripod) bridge, using 2 or 3 fingertips. If you can make the ball go out & back 50mm then that is all you need. In reality 99% of massés will be mini-massés where you need a bit of follow & swerve rather than an award-winning magical U shape.

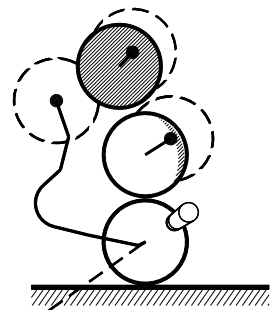
FREE-HAND If you want a powerful out & back, you should use a free-hand bridge. Tuck your left elbow into your hip & hold your loopy (boucle) bridge high up above the cue ball. Called a grand massé.

MANHOLE Eric installed a table in his garage, Murt came to have a look. Murt asked why a big manhole in the ceiling over the baulk end. Eric said that this was to allow him to practise massé shots, coz the ceiling was low. Murt laughed & laughed, & told everyone at the match that night.

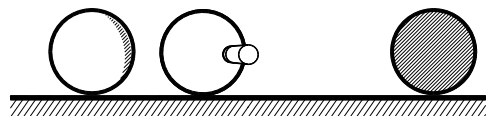
PIQUÉS

PIQUÉ 5 A little running-side helps the action, & it helps you to judge & feel the angle etc. A pure piqué doesn't have side-spin, & some might call this a mini-massé. It's amazing how much nice soft action you can get in these sorts of ponzys, & often regain perfect nursery ponzies in one shot. There are piqués scattered through other chapters of Cushion Crawler's Bible.

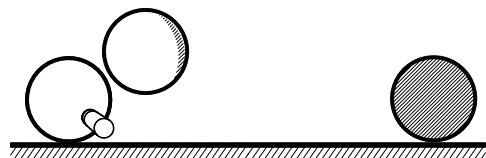




PIQUÉ 6 The qball iz on or close to the cushion. An ordinary piqué kan giv the cannon, az shown. An evil referee might call this a foul (i think that it iz a foul in the latest rules). I like to praktis this pozzy with the 3 balls touching & the qball on the cushion (not shown). Its almost foolproof. And one day it might kum up.

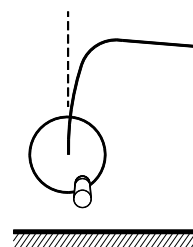


PIQUÉ 7 Here we kan pot red or we kan play the piqué cannon which kan bump the yellow to good postman's-knock pozzy, & giv an eezyer pot red.

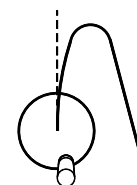


PIQUÉ 8 Here we play what Wally calls a Kum-Throo masse'. But it iz actually a piqué (ie zero side-spin).

MASSÉ 9 If u play a piqué uzing some side-spin, u get a curve, a massé. The main 5 varyables are, (a) line of cue, (b) inclination of cue (eg 75°), (c) amount of screw (eg 1/4 ball), (d) offset left or right (eg 1/2 tip), & (e) how hard u hit. U might find theze masse's eezyer to the left than to the right. So, u might havta treat the 5 varyables differently left & right (even for a perfekt mirror image pozzy).

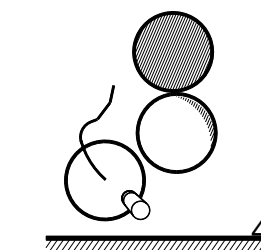
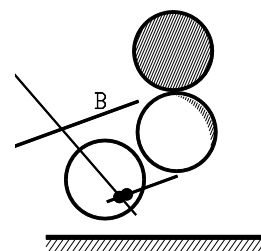
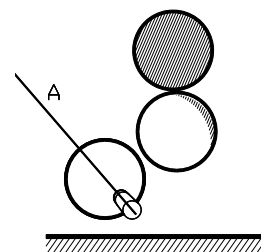


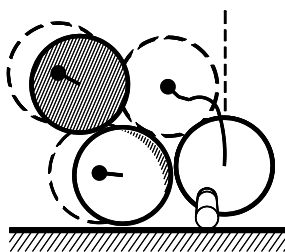
MASSÉ 10 Here we are looking for a sharp angle return. So the qtip offset iz less than in 9. Here the qball is well off the cushion. Hard up (frozen) to the cushion iz much more difficult.



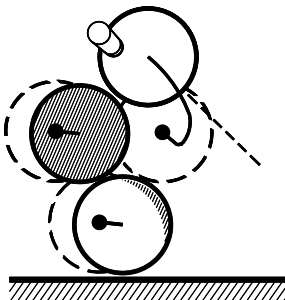
FROZEN If the qball iz frozen Massé 10 iz diffikult, there iz no space for the qtip. I hav a neat trick. i make a continual up & down (feather) moovment with the cue, uzing mostly my right hand & wrist. Then i gradually moov down closer & closer to the by now terrifyd ball. Eventually i make contact & i get a good rezult. Koz, the circumsized follow-throo duz the trick. But don't expect any super-massés.

MASSÉ 11A I could make a long list of thorts & actions etc before & during a massé. But most of us are set & ready to shoot in a second or two. And then we take ages on minor adjustments etc, uzuually while doing lots of feathering & praktis swings. I suppose that most of us vizualize the initial line for the trajekt (**LINE-A** in **11A**). And the final line (**LINE-B** in **11B**), & the kurved **TRAJEKT** itself (shown in **11C**). The **2 BLACK DOTS** in **11B** show the initial qtip aim point, & then the adjusted aim point to help get the Line-B trajekt. The non-named line drawn throo the qtip aim point & parallel to Line-B iz of no importance. If we are fond of applying a **TORQ** during the shot, then that torq could be applied parallel to Line-A, or more likely praps along a line (not shown) running from the final qtip aim point to the centre of the qball. I doubt that any other direction would work. And the cue would be aligned such that the **GRAIN-KICK & BEND-KICK** would be in line with the applied torq.

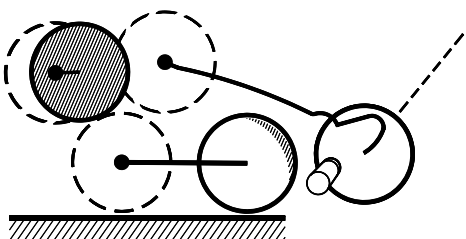




MASSÉ 12 U aim out az shown. Or u could aim left of that, to hit the yellow on the way out (proably Y-Y-R). On second thorts, it iz proably necessary to aim further right than shown, if u want to miss the yellow on the way out.



MASSÉ 13 We hate **BACK-HAND MASSÉS** (not an official term), ie needing a contortion so that u kan stroke towards the cush (rather than the standard away from the cush or parallel). U kan avoid this contorted massé by reeching from over the side-cush. U might be able to reech to the middle of the top-cush. Sit on the side-cush, & keep yor right toe on the floor.



GATHER

MASSÉ 14 This iz like 12, except that we need to take the yellow along for a ride if we want to leev good pozzy. We kan aim/play az shown by the broken line. Or we kan aim to hit the yellow very early, before the kurv happens (but don't giv the yellow too much pace).

NURSERIES, THE MASSÉ, THE PIQUÉ & MR G GAZDAG

Richard Holt, Billiards and Snooker, June 66

Mr G Gazdag, of Bradford, that irrepressible enthusiast for cannon play, in a letter a short time ago, chided me for contending (in a book i wrote on the game) that an amateur can win the worlds billiards title without making use of the three types of play or stroke mentioned above. He wrote as follows:

So when i happened to come across your statement that you can get into Heaven or rather become a world champion without close cannons, masse's, pique's, etc (there was no etc.! Ed.), saying in effect that you should not unduly worry about these, it comes strangely from one, who in music, being an opera lover, does not seem to be satisfied with anything but the best, & i could not help feeling uncomfortable. Aren't you a bit inconsistent in your taste? If Mozart wrote the part for the Queen of Night (The Magic Flute) so high, well, Joan Sutherland, pitched down a note or so, which is still near enough to Mozart's idea of the best. Pitching down is one thing & saying that you don't need this or the other or to "play safe", instead of attempting to perform the ideal, is definitely another. One is still opera at its possible best, the other is pop at its worst, where not only the comparatively primitive music, but even the language is twisted beyond recognition. Surely you must be able to see this? So, how can you defend this safety-rubbish?

Frankly, i cannot see that transposing an operatic aria lower than the original is anything of an analogy with excluding from a game such subsidiary elements as nurseries, the masse' & the pique'. Even so, however, i did not say that such strokes should be excluded; what i did say was that, if you are a first-class amateur, you could win the world title without playing these strokes, one of which, the nursery cannon, can only be mastered by professionals (& not all of them) who have practised since

boyhood; the masse', which i regard as an ugly blot on the aesthetic quality of billiards, & such a notable authority as the late Revolution J Hall-Yarr considered a foul shot, & it is, moreover, rarely if ever executed cleanly by even the best amateurs, & the pique' which is seldom needed. The pique' belongs to the screw-back genre & is, in its turn, scarcely an ornament to the game but its appearance is comparatively unoffending so far as the beauty of billiards is concerned. In the amateur championship, the use of the nursery cannon, the masse', & the pique' even, have not played any but an infinitesimal part in the proceedings. That is, no player who won the title has owed anything whatsoever to these strokes. To get the nursery position even is something beyond the ability of the great majority of amateurs, as they lack the delicate manoeuvring skill & touch of the famous close cannon players. They have, of course, performed short sequences when the balls have come together suitably, & by chance. What i stated, however, for which statement Mr Gazdag reprimands me, is hard fact. I said it is possible to win the world title without these three strokes & the qualities that have won the world title, have, in every case, been: superior skill in top-of-the-table play, & outstanding accuracy in hazard play, also ordinary cannon control Neither nurseries, nor masse's nor pique's have had anything whatever to do with it. When a singer performs an aria in a lower key than in which it was written by the composer, its ingredients, melody, harmony, rhythm, etc are identical in essence with the originals. Nurseries, the masse', the pique', differ thus from the general repertoire of strokes. In fact, the masse', related to English billiards is more of a conjuring trick -- the only time the great majority of English players manage to do it is paradoxically, when they pose for it. In the recent final between Dagley & Nolan, we did not see a single run of cannons, a masse' stroke, or indeed a pique' stroke. Yet we saw a great game. I have, i think, substantiated my contention that an amateur could win the world, or the national title, without playing a nursery cannon, even a sequence of two, a masse' or a pique'. What i also contend is that the masse' should be abolished, for it is (Continental game apart); an ugly & clumsy looking travesty of a stroke & one but very rarely needed -- why should a player be given this way of escape when, he gets a cover by bad play? -- & it could certainly be regarded as a "push". The pique' also has little to commend it in point of beauty & it also needs a vertical cue action which i regard as alien to the game. And as we never see true nurseries in even the best amateur play; well, they can remain, as they are cannons, & in amateur billiards, cannons mostly in slow motion. As to Mr Gazdag's opinion that these strokes (nurseries, masse's & pique's) are so important in the game that rejecting them implies falling short of the "ideal", i hold that ideal billiards can be performed without them. By the way, the masse' has a funny side to it. For some peculiar reason, a tradition has developed that the most skilful shot in billiards consists of the masse', especially in the minds of players, spectators & photographers, as the latter always invite players to pose at executing the mass shot. Fortunately, nobody has yet shouted, "let's see you do it".

HOW THE GAME GOES

by S A Mussabini, 1907 Reprinted in June 65, Billiards and Snooker

I am sorry to learn that there is a tendency to deride the rule lately passed with regard to the balls "**touching**". Any radical change, whether for good or for ill, seems most unwelcome to English billiardists. Look at the strong agitation which was needed before one of the most foul strokes that ever disfigured billiards was ruled unfair! I refer to the **push-stroke**, that break-building

agency of unhappy memory. There were some very, very **pushful artists** knocking about some ten to a dozen years ago before the matter was taken up in the Sporting Press, & after many expressions of opinion, finally, ruled illegal by the Billiard Association. The most prominent were **John Roberts, Edward Diggle & H W Stevenson**. These players were dead against any interference with the push-stroke. They, collectively, pleaded for its retention on the grounds that big breaks, which so pleased the public, would not be so readily forthcoming. When the **push-stroke** was put in its proper place -- the billiard scrap-heap -- the protest still continued, & their echoes are even now only dying fitfully away. Now, let us see what happened as the result of barring the **push-stroke**. I have mentioned that Roberts, Diggle, & Stevenson were its chief exponents. Did the barring clause affect their position in the billiard world ; did it rob the game of any of its charm ? No; a hundred times no! There is not one man who knows what he is talking about who will truthfully say that the **barring** of the **push-stroke** was not a **boon** to billiards & its chief demonstrators. What has done more to breed the beautiful **mass stroke**, that unflinching source of delight to spectators, & even to the players themselves? **The very positions that now demand a sinuous, whirling massed ball were those which previously were blurred over by the push-stroke.....**It has been the custom since 1898 to allow the player to operate from the D with the object white on the middle & the red ball on the billiard-spot whenever the balls have **touch**ed..... For what reason he should be so favoured it is hard to discover..... That rule.... is now no more.... At the recent general meeting, the following resolution was ... carried....."When the striker's ball lies **touching** an object-ball, he can only score off the second object-ball, or off the cushion. Should his ball lie **touching both** the object-balls, he can only score off a cushion. Should the striker, in playing on to the second object-ball, or on to a cushion, **disturb** the ball or balls with which the cue-ball is in contact, the stroke is **foul**"..... There is no doubt that the **close-cannon** specialists would be armed with a very studious caution when operating under the "leave them on the table" ruling. **What is more, they would need to polish up & put into use an extra supply of masse' shots eminently designed for this especial direction.**

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF BILLIARDS

ALCOCK'S SPORTING REVIEW JULY 1913 REPRINT OF
BEING A SELECTION OF THE LATEST & MOST POPULAR FANCY & TRICK SHOTS
KNOWN ON THE BILLIARD TABLE.

BY SIDNEY T FELSTEAD BADMINTON MAGAZINE

At any time it requires someone fairly tall & with great power to make a masse' with any degree of certainty, & the pique' shot, either for a loser or a cannon, is too uncertain for even the best of players unless they can get right over the cue ball. **One masse' only i have included, it is George Gray's wonderful shot by which he goes right round the apex of the triangle & makes a cannon.** I have seen a good many professionals attempt this stroke, but Gray is the only one who can do it with any certainty.....

TOM NEWMAN ADVANCED BILLIARDS 1924

Tom uzes the ordinary grip (not the spear-grip), albeit uzing mainly 2 fingers & thumb. I am amazed at how close many players get to the cue -- the cue iz uzually pressed into the side of the face, & into the chest, the eyes being nearer to the cue than for non-massé strokes. But Tom takes the cake -- Tom's photos show the cue passing under Tom's jaw, against the neck -- if Tom didn't hav a right-hand he could still play the stroke uzing hiz head -- the cue wedged under the jaw. Tom seems to think that a grand-massé iz one needing a large but sharp kurv -- but this name iz uzually only given to any powerful massé needing a high bridge, ie when the fingers are not on the table or cushion. Tom sez.....

the ordinary cue is not an ideal implement for the masse' stroke. Something shorter, stiffer, stouter, & with a bigger, "fatter" tip, is what is really needed -- a sort of first cousin to the cues used in the French & American cannon games is the kind of thing i mean. I dare say i might evolve such a cue & use it, but for the trouble it would be to carry it about all over the country, & also because "changing cues" in the middle of a nursery break might not be clever, to say nothing of the mild sensation such an innovation would create among the spectators.

..... As a matter of fact, as Arthur Goundrill has proved, it is possible to make many beautiful masse' shots with no bridge hand at all..... it is so fashionable to dogmatise about a certain kind of masse' bridge being the only one of any use.....

..... The actual cue-delivery is more of a quick drop on the ball & a rapid withdrawal of the cue than anything else..... You must allow the weight of the cue to do as much as it can, but, especially in the grand masse', there is a distinct downward thrust which calls for propulsionary power from the cue-hand.....to send the cue through almost, if not quite, to the cloth..... you will soon ascertain how far you must help the weight & natural "drop" of the cue to gain any desired effect.

..... As regards aiming..... aim, not to hit any desired portion of the object-ball, but to make the cue-ball curve as you intend it should..... the first thing i did was to estimate the curve the cue-ball must make to score the cannon; then i tried to forget about everything else except making the ball curl accordingly..... Many amateurs have given masse' strokes up in despair through not realizing this fact...

..... This sort of isolated difficulty, i find, is often at the bottom of what seems to be an insurmountable obstacle in making masse' strokes. Sometimes it is the sighting of the stroke, sometimes the handling of the cue, sometimes the making of the bridge, sometimes a little of each.....

..... so much harmful nonsense has been written, yes, & spoken, with the foolish intention of teaching men of different physique & aptitude how to play certain strokes by methods which are measured & defined with such precision that no latitude is left for the personal factor.

TOM REECE BILLIARDS FOR AMATEURS BY SIDNEY H FRY 1922

Tom haz a chapter on massés in Sidney's book. I hav never seen a photo of Tom doing a massé, but judging from hiz words regarding the grip & the thumb, he must hav uzed a spear-grip, not the ordinary-grip. Tom sez.....

it is my firm conviction that the mammoth break of the future lies in the direction of using the masse' stroke for positional play.... the best exponents... in English billiards are little better than novices..... the stroke is replete with perfectly amazing possibilities in the art of ball control in such a limited scoring area as the "spot end"... in many respects the most important phase of the masse', is to learn to hold the cue correctly & get the correct pose of the body & formation of the "bridge" hand..... The cue should be held lightly (not gripped), as far up the butt as u can conveniently reach, between the forefinger & thumb. Bring the thumb a little lower than the forefinger, as it is from the thumb you apply the downward pressure that imparts the necessary power to the stroke...In cueing you must "saw" the cue up & down very freely before making contact with the ball. If you fail to do this, you can get no power into the stroke & negative results will be obtained... amateurs..... Common faults noticed in their attempts are : (a) the cue held too long or too short, (b) the "bridge" hand placed so that it shakes when on the stroke, (c) hitting the ball before working the cue up & down to acquire the necessary pressure & power, & (d) making contact in the dead centre of the ball, instead of a little to one side or the other....

MANNOCK BILLIARDS EXPUNDED (1904 & 1908)

S A Mussabini woz the best billiards writer of hiz day (Clifford later).

I luv the quaint wordage.

The very pinnacle of the billiard-ladder is attained with a raising of the cue-butt to its greatest height..... Every additional elevation of the cue-butt ensures greater power being given to the cue-ball, & less communicated to the object-ball played on..... To begin at the beginning of this, the ultra-scientific side of the billiard art, reference should be made to the "**swerving-ball**" strokes shown..... They represent a **half-masse'**.....The poorest player will at once derive wonderful benefit from this raising of the knuckles of the "bridge" hand in all his "**screw**" strokes. He will not only get double the amount of retrograde force into the ball, but, in addition, he will be enabled to do so at one-half the pace..... Now, the **pique'** shot is just a plain "**screw**" with a vertical cue-butt, the cue-ball being struck aft of its top centre..... a nice illustration..... In the first of these the lie of the cue is at an angle of about 60 degrees, a half-and-half sort of stroke, which..... bring the played **object-ball** back with it from the cushion.....leaving the three balls nicely together..... To leave the first **object-ball** by the cushion instead of bringing it back... the cue should be almost raised to its highest possible elevation..... the cue-ball....runs back to the red, leaving the first object-ball away by the cushion rail... As far as English billiards iz concerned, the different effects to be produced from a raised cue-butt may almost be said to be a force of the future. For many years our professionals knew of little more than the swerving ball, the raised "bridge" hand for "screws", & the **pique'**..... The pique' has also been part of the English game for the past fifty years. But the biggest stroke that comes with a raised cue-butt, the sinuous, curling massed ball, is only just coming into it. Up to 1898 our game was disfigured by the "**odious push-stroke**". Not until it was ruled out did our players begin to cultivate the **masse'**, & then only in a half-hearted kind of way.... Yet, as compared with those past-masters of its manipulation, the French & Americans, out first-class cueists, in the main, play

the stroke in the most primitive fashion. The English players only use the masse' when absolutely obliged to. The **French & Americans...** use it indiscriminately, as much for position (when a plainer stroke could have scored but given a doubtful "leave")... They employ it scientifically; we merely in an opportunistic sense..... it has been the general custom to ascribe the proficiency of the Continental & American players to their **bigger balls & heavier cues**. But it is a very dubious point as to whether they do derive any advantage from them. For my own part, i consider that the smaller the ball played upon the easier must the making of the masse' be. You are enabled to come down on it from a greater height -- a decided assistance to your stroke. And as for the heavier cues -- well, the wonder is that there can be found men who do such feats with them. Our own are better suited to the delicacy of touch, & fluency of cue-movement before the ball is struck, than any used on the 2¼-inch balls known to the **carambolage**..... there is no reason to doubt that the day will come when such a proficient is unearthed..... the pique' shot..... the cue has to be moved up & down as **rapidly** as one is able to do. These preparatory movements give life to the shot..... Keep it slithering up & down, as quickly & evenly as possible..... let the blow be as **light** as you can make it. Do not try to jab through the ball on to the table. Try always, rather, to see how daintily & crisply the impact may be made..... In short, the great thing to be aimed at is the **maximum** of rotary motion with the **least** force that can be put into the stroke..... Get the cue up as high as u can, & the wielding hand right above the shoulder (which is the real secret of getting a direct return)..... & as close to the head as u conveniently can..... The further the wielding hand is held away from the shoulder the more uncertain is the return curve..... The direct return from a ball lying close to it will be found a very simple matter, quite as much as a straight "screw-back" with a horizontal cue is. But in both cases the divergences to left or right of the direct **recoil** ask for considerable **judgment**..... Each separate contact will throw the cue-ball back at a distinctive **angle**. A very wide area may be covered in this way, more, indeed, than the pique' has ever as yet, to my knowledge, been utilized for in English billiards..... Some years ago there was a much-favoured "trick-stroke", which took the form of placing a piece of money on a ball; the player's ball was set close beside it, & the third ball several feet away from either. The thing to be done was to cannon from the ball holding the piece of money without knocking the latter off. By using the pique' this was quite easily managed..... For the short range the "**bridge**" hand may be allowed to rest upon the table. The longer-range ones, however, require such greater pace in the cue-ball that it must be raised quite a foot above the level of the cushions..... Excellent **practice** for the pique' is to be found by placing the **red** ball on the **billiard-spot**, with the cue-ball directly behind it on the top cushion..... Try a straight recoil back from the red to the spot you play.... from. Then, to gain an idea of what angles other than full contacts throw, try to make a **losing hazard** in either corner pocket. Something like a half-ball stroke on the red will bring this about..... The elegant, refined masse' stroke is a combination of "screw" & "side"..... For the pique' the wielding hand is held right above the player's shoulder, directly above the cue-ball. But for the masse' delivery it is thrown

wide of the shoulder (as on Plates ii & iv)..... Instead of attacking the cue-ball in a straight line, it does so at a tangent. Here, at once, is an example of cross-cueing, and, therefore, a communication of "side", notwithstanding that the ball is struck on almost the same point as in the pique'.... The direction of the cue-butt sends it out in the true line of the cue's impulse to begin with. Then the retrograde, enforced by the stroke behind its centre, & in a much lesser degree the "side" it carries, draws the ball around in a sort of **half-circle**..... one of the chief factors is the formation of a correct masse' "bridge". This really prime necessity is hardly comprehended by our professionals... only... one, or at most two... have appreciated the fact. Any rough, slipshod kind of "bridge" is good enough for the great majority..... I have myself devised a "bridge"..... A **tripod** is made with three fingers.... The "bridge" hand is screwed around until the outer side directly faces the player's body..... It is an uncomfortable position..... at first..... The player's head is placed as closely to the cue as he can get it to there..... He looks down the line of the cue to that point of the ball's strikable face where his own judgement tells him he has to strike. The cue is suspended.... between the thumb & forefinger of the wielding hand -- not held, but lightly balanced on them. Its real support comes with a pressure upon the thumb of the "bridge" hand..... There should be **no gripping** of the cue-butt, for by this means the **life** is taken out of the shot.... To obtain a greater run....the "bridge" hand has to be lifted from the table.... The "bridge" arm is pressed against the body, the elbow touching the hip-joint, to keep it stedy, & the cue is buckled through the forefinger. Many Continental players hook their thumbs in their waistcoat pockets, & others place them in their waistcoat button-holes, to gain the necessary steadiness of the "bridge" arm.....With the hand on the table the strokes are called a **petit masse'**, or **petit pique'**. Raised off the table... **grand masse's**, or **grand pique's**.... I am not an advocate of billiard-players carrying a bag of cues about, as do golfers their clubs for every class of stroke, but i certainly am very strongly of the opinion that the ordinary cue is by no means an ideal one for coping with the masse' or pique'..... one has to hold it somewhere below, or at any rate at the end of, the splicing.... they have at once a tendency to become "**top-heavy**"..... What he needs is a cue of less length.... with more weight forward. I have invented a **masse' cue** on this principle. It is only some **two-thirds** of the length of the ordinary cue, & the gain all players experience with it in their masse' & pique' strokes is almost incredible. I have had it weighted to **seventeen ounces**, with the weight well inclining to the point of the cue.... Referring to the "aft" strokes, the most delicate of them all is that technically known as the "**dead-ball**" **masse'**. It is employed in the course of close-cannon play along the cushions, & when the minimum of pose only is required to be used.... For masse'-stroke **practice** of the short-range order i recommend the placing of the cue-ball on the top cushion behind the billiard-spot with he object-ball slightly in front of it, & the red ball on the spot.... Try & cannon around to the red in both directions, left & right of the object-white....

RISO LEVI BILLIARDS, THE STROKES OF THE GAME 1907-1916

Riso mainly shows the large variety of massé & piqué cannons & loozers possible.

Riso haz 36 drawings, & sez.....

unless a player receives some coaching his progress even with a considerable amount of practice will necessarily be very slow..... A clean, crisp stroke should be used, & exactly as in ordinary screws the fingers should grip the cue tightly just at the moment it meets the ball..... First-class players play these close pique' strokes without causing the cue tip to touch the cloth..... Masse' stroke positions may roughly be divided into two classes, viz., those in which the cue ball is some little distance from the first object ball & those in which it lies quite close to it. The latter are generally the easier.....

DALY'S BILLIARD BOOK 1913

Important! The cue must not be stopped just as the ball is hit. The tip must "go through" nearly to the cloth....Doubly important! Most beginners try to hit too near the edge. **Don't strike near the edge of the cue ball, but nearer the center as you look down upon the ball.** This avoids miscues. The "feel" of the shot is as though you were trying to drive the ball down through the table bed.... For a masse' grip one finger & thumb or two fingers & thumb may be used. The latter gives a firmer hold. It is well to hold the cue very firmly, **but a flexible wrist motion**, free from jerk, so that the cue tip may go well "through" the ball, is essential. When in position it is well to feel that the wrist is arched a bit; that makes the "follow-through" easier.... Hit a good, firm stroke, & try to feel the cue tip cling to the cue ball, & push the side of the ball downward, or "knead" it down. The shot is not a sharp hammer tap, but a clinging shot..... The tyro is tempted to use English on almost every stroke. He must learn early never to use English unless there is a Special Reason for it. In cushion shots, more especially in one-cushion shots, avoid English if you can, thus getting the "land" much more nearly dead, as well as increasing your accuracy of execution..... The cue ball lands lightly & does not kick the carom ball away.

In 2 photos, Daly haz the cue touching hiz cheek.

Daly reproduces a diagram by **Benjamin F Garno**, from "Modern Billiards". This shows 4 angles of stroke. No 1 iz a Close Massé needing $78\frac{3}{4}^{\circ}$. No 2 iz a Half massé needing $67\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$. No 3 iz a Long, slow curve needing 45° . No 4 iz a Jump shot needing $22\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$.

MAJOR WILLIAM BROADFOOT BILLIARDS BADMINTON LIBRARY 1896

This haz the first reference in my library to the term Piqué. Major Bill shows 4 diagrams of a piqué, 3 cannons (these are novel) & 1 loozer (similar to the one shown by Crawley earlier). None are closely associated with proper nursery cannons, except that one iz a nice nursery gather (driving ball 2 across the table & back). Bill sez...

Pique' & masse' are not often used in English billiards; the latter, indeed, seldom or never, whilst the former, when used, is miscalled masse'..... the real distinction between pique' & masse' being that in the former the cue's axis is directed to the centre of the ball..... in the latter, the cue's axis is not directed through the centre, but on one side or other of it, with the consequence that the path of the ball is no longer a straight but a curved line..... & produce some beautiful curves. Now, so long as the push stroke is allowed, masse' will not be much attempted; it is difficult of execution at any time & in any position, impossible on a large English table save when the balls are near a cushion. It further has the great disadvantage, when played hard, of causing a dent or pit in the cloth sufficient to deflect or arrest a very slow ball, & therefore soon spoils

a cloth near the cushions on the very part most used for nursery cannons. It is also doubtful whether with the most skilful manipulation effect can be got with small balls & fine-pointed cues at all equal to that which is obtained in the French game. Hence for many reasons we are indisposed to recommend the study & practice of this undoubtedly beautiful stroke. Quite otherwise, however, with piqué', which may often be used with advantage in the English game & without harm to the table. The stroke is indispensable when ball 1 is so near ball 2 that the screw-back cannot be made in the ordinary way, or when the cushion prevents the application of the cue..... Respecting masse' proper, it is not proposed to write in detail. Those who desire more information are referred to 'Le Billard', by M Vignaux, from which excellent work, though on the French game, much may be learnt by players of the English game..... The fault of amateurs is always to play too hard, a stroke which requires the greatest delicacy & the lightest possible touch.

JOHN ROBERTS ROBERTS ON BILLIARDS (186?)

My second edition (1869) makes the first reference (in my library) to the term Massé, but duznt uze the term Piqué. Roberts defines it az follows.....

.....**Masse.** A twisting top stroke.

There iz only one drawing of interest here, showing a piqué, alltho Roberts calls it a massé -- it shows nothing more than a ball in the Dee -- & it shows the balls trajectory, which goze straight up the table almost to the centerline, & then returns just into baulk, almost on the same line. Obviously a greatly exaggerated & otherwise inaccurate portrayal, koz Roberts sez.....

..... What have been termed "**fancy**" strokes cannot claim any other connection with the game than that they are shown on a billiard-table; & nothing is more likely to prove **destructive** to good play than attempting them in a **match**. In order, however, to **amuse** such of my readers as are desirous of knowing what really can be done, i have added, on plate 20, five **curious** strokes, none of which have ever, to my knowledge, before been published, though they are known to most experienced players, save No 4, which requires the use of the **masse** or **top-twist**, the cue being held **perpendicularly**..... 4. **Berger** was extremely clever in giving a miss in baulk without touching a cushion. He used a **perpendicular** stroke, hitting his ball near the top on the side closest to him, which was thus forced over the line, turning under & under. Shortly it stopped, & then, turning over & over, rolled back into or near the **D**. Many curious **cannons** are effected by the **masse**, which i have no opportunity to illustrate, except on a billiard-table, where i shall be always glad to show them to visitors.

CAPTAIN CRAWLEY THE BILLIARD BOOK (1866)

ENGRAVING This haz the first engraving that i can find showing a player in the act of playing a massé or piqué. The caption sez.....

Position for a Top Hazard. The description sez.....

..... Sometimes, however, it is necessary -- as when a ball lies close to another or under a cushion -- that the Cue be raised in order that you may get its point to the top of the ball....

The engraving duznt show the qball frozen -- it shows the qball (it looks more like a grape actually) about 6 balls clear of the cushion -- what iz going on here? **PIQUÉ** Actually, the cue iz being held at about 70°, & the distance to the red iz about 7 balls,

alltho the balls are actually drawn not much bigger than grapes. The stroke iz being played towards the center of the table, alltho the third ball iz not shown. If the stroke iz a hazard, then it must be a piqué, koz a massé (ie with some side) would be unnecessary & more difficult. The qball iz going to be hit on the equator from the cue's viewpoint, or slightly abov. Whether the qball iz going to be hit dead-center or a bit left or right of center cannot be seen from the obzerver's (the engraver's) pozzy.

HAZARD What the hazard might be i don't know -- obviously not a winning hazard, koz the only time u would need a swerv etc for a winning hazard here would be if the other ball woz in the way, which it iznt. Hence the hazard must be a loozing hazard -- probly into a middle-pocket -- alltho it might be back into a corner-pocket. But any such loozer -- whether into a middle-pocket or into a corner pocket -- must be more difficult than a simple winner.

GRIP The interesting thing iz that -- the player's grip iz az it would be for an ordinary stroke. What i meen iz -- most photos in most books show the player gripping the cue az u would if u were going to throw it like a spear. I am not talking about whether it iz a full grip or whether it iz just uzing the thumb & one or two fingers, i am talking about which side of the cue iz the home of the thumb. Crawley shows the thumb on the far side from the player, which makes the thumb lower than the palm.

SPEAR GRIP Me, i always change my grip to a spear-grip once the cue-angle gets abov say 40°, hence my thumb iz on the near side, & it iz abov the palm & fingers.

TRIPOD BRIDGE Crawley also shows 2 engravings, one showing in effect a close-up of the earlyer engraving, showing a tripod bridge (alltho Crawley duznt uze that term), & the second showing a plain finger bridge, the cue etc being at 45°. Crawley sez of both.....

.....*the proper way in which the High Bridge is made.*

PIQUÉ Crawley shows 2 drawings of a **High Oblique Screw**. The first drawing iz a side view of a qball & a cue -- the cue being at about 70° & hitting the qball at about an 1/8th ball below center (from the cue's view). This iz the earlyst reference to a Piqué in any of my English billiards books, alltho Crawley duznt uze the term Piqué. Crawley sez,.....

*The High Oblique Screw --- This curious & often very useful stroke is made by striking your ball on its top-side, with a downward rubbing action of the hand, accompanied by a sort of half-turn of the wrist. The action is nearly indescribable, but any good player can show you how to make it. The ball must be struck on the side that is towards the player. If struck on the outer side, you will produce a **Reverse Screw**. The effect of the **High Screw** is to cause the ball to jump a little, & to twist back on reaching the Object-ball. It is a very useful stroke when you wish to strike a ball near to your own & **cannon** back on to a ball behind, or make a **Hazard** in a near pocket.*

The second drawing iz a plan view of the 3 balls lying close to a corner pocket, & it shows a trajectory for the qball twisting back off the red & into the pocket, & it also shows the alternative trajectory for a cannon onto the third ball. Crawley sez.....

.....Case g is the **High Oblique Screw**, by which you make either a **back Cannon** or a **Pocket**:-- try both.

SWERVY Crawley shows a drawing of a swerve stroke -- the 3 balls are in a line & not very closely spaced. Here Crawley makes an early reference to a swerve or half-massé, alltho Crawley duznt uze these terms. Crawley sez.....

.....Case d is the **High Oblique Stroke** already explained. The Object-ball is reached without touching the centre ball; or the centre-ball is **thrust aside** & the **Cannon** follows.

MASSÉ Crawley shows a drawing of a Side-stroke Canon -- the 3 balls are in a line & almost touching, the red iz in the middle, the qball almost touching the cushion. The drawn qball trajectory iz a half-circle around the red, & i suppoze that the qball iz ment to touch the red along the way. Crawley's drawing iz not dissimilar to Kentfield's earlyer drawing, altho neither uzed the term Massé. Crawley sez,...

Case 2. You cannon in this instance by playing with a nearly **perpendicular** cue at the ball nearest the cushion, striking it on either side, according az you wish it to **curl** to the right or the left:-- a most elegant stroke, which requires very decisive treatment & some practice.

NEAR THUMB OR FAR THUMB

NEAR THUMB Az i sed, for a massé, i originally thort that most old-time players & most modern players (every player actually) had their thumb on the near side (the spear-grip), but in fact scrutiny of my library shows that the players were split on this issue -- in fact 3 players (Hoppe & Joe Davis & Bob Marshall) were bi-grippers. The spear-grippers in my library were.....

Daly (Daly's Billiard Book, 1913, 2 photos).

Fred Lindrum (Spot End Billiards, 1913, 1 photo).

Joe Davis (Billiards Up to Date, 1929, 1 photo. But in a moovy, he uzes the ordinary grip for a half-masse').

Arthur Goundrill (Moovy).

Claude Falkiner (Moovy).

Tom Reece (Moovy).

Mannock (Billiards Expounded, 1904, 1 photo).

Geza Gazdag (The Accomplished Cuedman, 1991?, 2 photos)

Peall (All About Billiards & How to Pot, 1925 & 1939, 1 photo)

Hoppe (Thirty Years of Billiards, 1925 & 1971, 2 photos) One shows a masse' uzing the spear-grip (thumb on inside). The other shows a grand (free-hand) pique' uzing the ordinary grip (thumb on outside). Hmmm. Whats going on here -- i would hav thort that, if someone were to change grips for strokes, then it would be the grand-masse' & the grand-pique' that would be favoured with the more powerfull spear grip -- but Willie duz it the other way around -- Hmmm -- mightbe it had something to do with reecheing the particular stroke in question.

Bob Marshall (later photo in hiz book, ie when much older).

Alcock (Billiards, 1901, 1 photo of an anonymous player).

Jack Karnehm (Understanding Billiards, 1976, 1 photo).

I karnt find any reference in my library re the 2 basic ways of holding the cue for a massé or piqué. I suppoze that there were actually 3 ways when u include Sutton who had lost both hiz hands abov the wrists. U could allmost make it 4 ways if u include Arthur Goundrill who had lost hiz left hand, hiz bridge hand. Anyhow, all writers hav been silent on this important point. **FAR THUMB** Players & books showing the thumb on the far side (the ordinary grippers) include.....

Crawley (1 woodcut, 1866).
Bennett (1 woodcut, 1873 to 1894).
Clarke McConachy (Moovy).
Fred Davis (Moovy).
Joe Davis (Moovy).
Newman (3 photos in Advanced Billiards, 1924).
Melbourne Inman (Cannons & Big Guns, 1928, 1 photo. But it duznt hav a photo of Tom Reece playing a massé).
Walter Lindrum (photos & moovys 1932).
Bob Marshall (early photo in hiz book, ie when younger).
Hoppe (1 photo. Az mentioned abov -- for a grand-piqué).
Horace Lindrum (Lindrums' World, 1999, 1 photo).
Rex Williams (Snooker, 1975, 1 photo).

U kan add Eric's name to this list (see photo at the end of this chapter) -- but i hav tryd this Far-Thumb (ie the ordinary-grip), & for me it iz hopeless -- it iz useless for massés to the left (i am right handed) & it iz half useless for massés to the right. But i suppose that it depends on how u learnt -- ie its a bit like being able to play ordinary strokes left-handed or right-handed. Anyhow, i reckon that a near-thumb (spear-grip) iz likely to suite u, & it iz more powerful. But praps the far-thumb might suit u. Or praps u kan uze either, az needed, az did Hoppe & Joe Davis. The ordinary-grip iz praps not entirely suited to the light finger hold that i mentioned earlier. It certainly iznt at all suited to the wristy action that i recommended earlier.

CAPTAIN CRAWLEY BILLIARDS (1856)

This book duznt mention the terms **Massé** or **Piqué**, but it haz a drawing of 3 balls spaced **closely** in a line, in a chapter on **Cramp Strokes**, & sez.....

*The stroke marked 3 in Fig. 32 is comparatively **useless**, & is introduced simply to show what may be done by a clever player. Here it is the object of the striker to play on the distant ball without touching the centre ball. This may be accomplished either by the stroke called the **dip**, in which you lift or **jump** your own ball over the centre ball, or by making your own ball assume a **parabolic curve** to the object without touching the centre ball. To make the **dip** you must strike your ball about three-fourths in the centre, your cue being **raised** so as to command the upper surface of the ball. For this purpose you must raise the **rest hand** on to the tops of the fingers & strike **perpendicularly** down onto the ball with a **sharp** & **sudden** impetus -- which, by the way, is very likely to **tear** the cloth & cost you a **guinea**. The striker's ball then **rises** from the table with a **reversed** action, & passes **over** the centre ball on to the end one. Or the same **effect** may be produced by an extra-ordinary fine slow **side stroke**, as shown in the engraving.*

Then it haz a drawing of a **long-range** line of balls along a cushion, Crawley sez..

*In Fig. 31, I have shown a very common **experiment** -- that of striking a ball without touching the intermediate one, all the balls lying near to or touching the cushion. The ball (A) at the bottom of the table is the striker's,*

& the next we will suppose to be the red. To strike the ball 1 without touching the red you must hold the cue nearly **perpendicularly** & strike your own ball right on the **top**, aiming half an inch from the red; to strike 2, the same kind of stroke is made, aiming two inches from the red; for 3, you must aim three inches; & for the stroke on the ball marked 4 you must take aim at least four inches from the red. In each of these strokes the distance to be travelled by your own ball must be carefully measured, as upon the **curve** assumed depends its success. Striking the ball on the **top** has the effect of altering its **running axis**, and, in fact, making a **screw** by striking a high ball instead of a low one; hence the **curve**, which is equivalent to the extreme side, or to the return stroke when the ball is struck much below its centre..... **Cramp** strokes..... are mere **tricks** of the hand, & have **no** more to do with the **real** game of billiards than the eccentricities of the **puppet** & the **novelist** have with genuine humour & pathos.

COMMENTS. Here Crawley mentions the modern **jump-stroke**, which he calls the **dip**. The **bridge** hand is called the **rest**. And he mentions **raising** it on to the **tips** of the fingers. He mentions, **running axis, parabolic, perpendicular, screw**. Regarding the massé, all Crawley sez iz that it iz, *an extra-ordinary fine slow side stroke*, Crawley duznt uze the term massé nor twist. Nor duz Crawley talk about uzing such a stroke to score a cannon.

EDWIN KENTFIELD THE GAME OF BILLIARDS (1839)

This book duznt mention a **Massé** or **Piqué**, but it haz a drawing of a massé cannon played with a nearly perpendicular cue & the 3 balls **closely** in a line, the gap being 2½ balls & then 2 balls. The trajectory of the qball iz an arc onto the rear-side (surely it should be to the front-side, or the side-side) of the center-ball, & hence to the last ball. This iz the earlyst drawing of a massé in my library. Jonathon sez.....

*Plate LXVI., fig. 1. Fig. 2 represents a **trick**, or **fanciful** stroke, & it should **never** be played for in the course of the game. The way, however, to effect it, is, to strike **down** upon the ball, holding the cue **vertically**.*

The cue in this drawing haz been drawn in pencil later, & iz drawn to show a nearly vertical cue hitting sown on the qball on the right-hand-side. There are also some pencilled amendments or additions to this paragraph written in a very nice neat hand (perhaps Jonathon's own hand) which make the above read az follows....

*..... The way, however, to effect it, is, to strike **vertically** down upon the ball, **striking it a little on the right side nearest the corner pocket**.*

Then there iz Plate VI -- **The Positions of the Cue** -- which shows 6 drawings showing varyus pozzyz of the cue for varyus strokes. One of theze shows a cue hitting down at about **40°** just abov center from the cue's view point, the caption sez -- *Position of the cue in **jumping** the ball*. Another drawing shows the cue at about **80°**, hitting down on the top of the ball at about the bottom quarter-point from the que's point of view. Jonathon must be talking about a **piqué** here, koz the caption sez.....

*..... Position of the cue when the ball is near to another, for a **twist**.*