

THE
WHOLE ART
OF
NORFOLK WRESTLING,
WITH
RULES AND ORDERS
RELATING THERTO,
FOR THE
Use of Landlords, &c.
WHERE WRESTLING MATCHES ARE HELD,
BY
CHARLES LAYTON,
THE
CELEBRATED GAME CHICKEN.

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THE ART of WRESTLING.

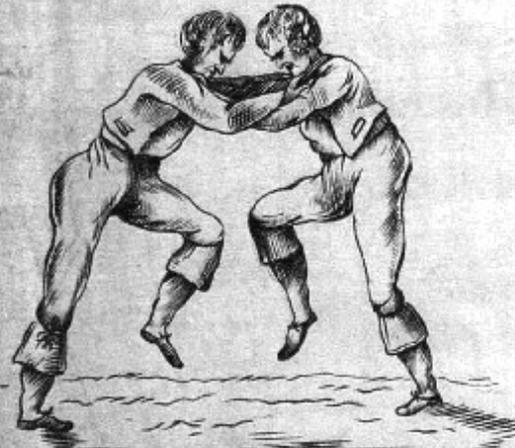
1st The Trippett



2nd The loose leg



3rd The double touch



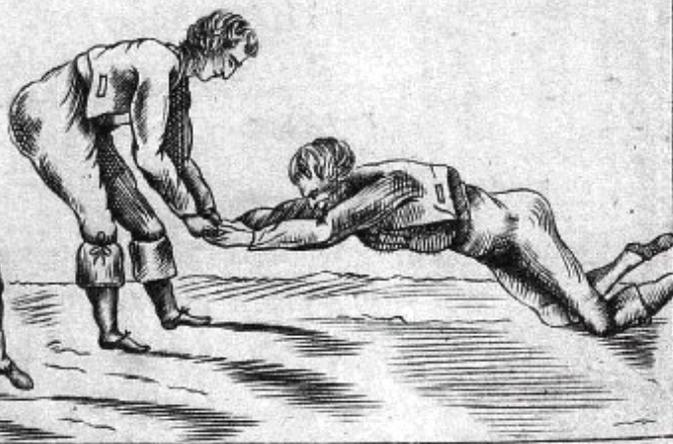
4th Howard's hank



5th The flying hobby



6th The blackguard snatch



Dalrymple Sc.

A SHORT INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Art of Wrestling

WRESTLING, called one of the Olympic Games, and as an athletic amusement was encouraged in the remotest ages, by which youth were enabled to display their muscular powers; not merely to amuse the populace, but to elicit courage, and thence trained to an exercise, which might ultimately prove beneficial to some part of the community.

Page 1

But there are many people who will hold out and say, that it is of no use in the least, to learn the art of Wrestling, that it is so much in the blackguard strain, that it is scarcely worth noticing; and I am confident, myself, it is reckoned very low in the estimation of thousands. But this I should like to try, if possible to confute; but am well aware that it requires a much more able pen than mine to do it; but as wrestling is lawful, I will assert that it is useful; and I verily believe if there was an army of wrestlers engaged in a skirmish, and had spent all their ammunition, rather than they would turn their backs on their enemies, they would try their efforts and grapple with them, and make them

stink a little matter of shoe leather, I mean to say, if they were true Norfolk Gamesters. Some will say that wrestling makes a man contentious and quarrelsome. And only fill him full of pride and conceit of himself; to which I answer, that you very seldom find a good gamester but what is quite the contrary; and will rather put up with what another will call an insult.

Page 2

And resent it as such, when a good wrestler will let it pass by as it seemingly, unnoticed: but still it enables man greatly to take his own part, for I have seen an old man cope with a young one in company, when contentious, merely from knowing how to use his hands and feet a little matter scientifically; which knowledge he certainly obtained in his youth. I cannot say that I ever heard of many women who approved of our Norfolk collar-hold play. The rending and tearing of jackets for them to mend, when they might have been otherwise employed, more to their satisfaction; and for this reason only, I verily believe, many wrestlers might doctor their own shins when occasion requires it, before they assist, or even pity him.

Now as I mean only to give you a short treatise on the subject of wrestling, and of the art and science thereto belonging, I shall very briefly, and in short, lay it down, let my readers' comments upon it be what they flavor may or will; for as the saying is, 'tis a poor cock that can neither crow nor tread; flow crow I can and do for a certainty. Which is only the Theory; and as for the practical part, I leave that to many scientific amateurs who have witnessed it, many times, in several parts of the County of Norfolk,

Page 3

But flatter myself to say, that, from so much practice In my youth, and for many; years succeeding, I ought, at least, to have obtained some little knowledge of the true judgment of the game and as I mean to confine myself to Norfolk play only, I have only to lay down six different modes of falling that I deem necessary for any man to know that follow it; or for any youth who wishes to learn and follow the science, to practice Upon; which are as follows The Trippet, the Loose leg, the Double Touch, Howard's Hank, the Flying Hobby, and the Blackgaurd Snatch; but the

two latter are of very little use, only in hand-hold falling.

But getting the hold is the most material that a young man ought to practice himself too first to become a good Wrestler, for even if he have learnt, and know the above Plays well, there is then as much or more judgement in keeping your adversary from throwing you, as there is in throwing him. But what I mean by the hold being the most material is, because no hold is allowed fair that is caught below the waist band or thucklebone, either in Ring or Prize Wrestling; so that it must either both hand-collar hold, or one hand-collar, and the other elbow

Page 4

hold, the latter of which is my favourite hold; and I do allow it to be the best by far, especially for a short armed man who is a good Trippet player, as makes his arm as long as his adversary's, let his adversary's arm be it as long as it may; for if it so happen he is catched by a Loose Leg or a Hank, it enables him many times to extricate himself from either; when at the same time if he had both hands-collar hold, he must most certainly leave go of one hand to save himself from falling, or be

instantly pressed down by the weight of his adversary's arm, of either sides of which the catch is made. I do not mean to say but what there are a few more distinguishable holds, but they must be, and are, all of a similar nature.

THE TRIPPET

Is in my opinion the safest play that is either taken with the right Or left foot, it matters not which but there are very few players that can play well with both.

Page 5

The Trippet is the first effort a good player will make at after taking his hold; but if his adversary can stand against it, then some other course must be taken to rid him the quickest way, or they are both liable of getting desperately kicked; but when it comes to that it requires a good temper and a great deal of caution, for kick sharp or faint, kick high, kick low, to kick certain is the main thing for in a good safe player there is some dependence, for if lie can keep his antagonist from throwing of him, he will, as is reasonable, make him in time throw himself You may draw twenty Trippets without any effect if you cannot work your adversary off his guard, either by

kicking of him, or giving him the feint, so as to make him believe you want to loose leg him, or in some other manner; and to do that requires some judgement, for you should not shift your hold in the least but let hand, foot, and eye follow as close as clock work, and then you are almost sure of making good your purchase: but if it so happen you do not succeed in your draw, do not hang, for a hanging Trippet is the worst and most unmanly-like sight scientific amateurs can behold.

Page 6

THE LOOSE LEG

Is a beautiful play when executed in a manly like manner, but it will not admit of any dallying, especially with a light man, for if he have any notion at all of playing, it is dangerous striking at him, for you would hardly know whether you had caught him or not; and if you had, he might very possibly draw back his leg and give you the fall backwards. But in playing with a heavy man it quite alters the case, for no man of weight can either strike or clear himself, without being first felt at sop by his adversary; and then if he should be caught by him he has nothing more to do but take his leg out of the way clew, and his

adversary will instantly fall before him, if it were merely from his own weight only.

THE DOUBLE TOUCH

Is a play that has certainly the most art attached to it of any that Norfolk can boast of Many attempts may be made by what I call bunglers, to let you know that they have this play in them; when at the same time,

Page 7

if a good player would show and even give them his leg, they dare not attempt to strike at it: and I can and do assert that ninety and more out of a hundred have no idea of the time and season when that this Play requires to be imitated at; neither is there scarcely half a score in the county of Norfolk, although the best Wrestlers in England, that can and do show this Play in a ring for a prize: yet he may do it extremely well, when playing a civil fall merely for practice and amusement. This Play requires great judgment, a deal of caution.' it will admit of no irritation, for if you lose your temper, 'tis seven chances out often but you lose your fall, especially if then you attempt at the above-named play.

HOWARD'S HANK.

Is a very peculiar Hank, taking two different ways; one of which is, if your adversary strike a Trippet at you, and you stand against it, and Step after him on one foot, that of the same side, he draw his Trippet at You, and immediately Hank him contrarily, with your other leg, placing the calf of your leg in your adversary's ham-string and throwing your weight upon him at the same time: this is deemed one.

Page 8

The other Hank is, when a Loose Leg takes place and is not immediately carried, but Hank with one foot, and step with the other till your adversary fall

Now there are many different ways of falling which will often take place in wrestling that is deemed fair, which is out of the power of any person to explain accurately; such as falling upon one knee from the draw of a Trippet, the same occasioned by a sharp kick, or a faint Loose Leg, a sudden chuck may also draw you on one hand, which is allowed to be a fall, and many other ways indescribable, or even scarcely worth noticing; and if I had my mind should not at all be

brought into the rules of wrestling, as I am a man only for the right clean concern.

Now in my beginning I observed, that those plays, called the Flying Hobby and the Black-guard Snatch, were of no use at all only in hand-hold falls; which is a play that I consider tbe most uncertain by odds of the two; for in this play the best man will often get thrown, entirely from his own play, when his adversary cannot play at all, nor have the least merit of the fall; only by making those draws upon your

Page 9

adversary when every thing appears safe, you then lose your hold and you are down in an instant; or even if you catch him a good Loose Leg, and by that turn him nearly round you may then very possibly, lose your hold; and if by chance you do not fall yourself; you are a deal more endangered and likely to go down than your adversary is; so as I do not like this play, I forbear giving you any further description of it; but I flatter myself to say, That I could once play, either as well, or better, than the generality of Norfolk Wrestlers. But the only and very reason that I do not like hand-hold falling is, there is not

purchase enough in the hold, for a good player to try and make his efforts purchase; for weight is of no use, only to make you throw yourself; and strength is of no use only in the hands and wrists for a good player, as well as for one cannot play at all.

Now, as I before observed, 'tis of no use to lay down any instructions, relating to the Art of Wrestling, for young beginners, as it is also Olympic games; for it must be practice after makes perfectness: and it is out of the power one, without a deal of the latter, to become a good wrestler,

Page 10

I shall therefore forbear wasting your time with any more remarks on that head. But as Wrestling is so much in vogue, in this my mother county, I shall lay down a few rules a little worthy of observing; which if of no utility to Wrestlers themselves, may possibly be to Landlords, &C where Wrestling matches are held, with a description of a circular bill, which ought to be issued out a fortnight at least, before the Wrestling match takes place, and the following rules and orders adhered or referred to, in case of

any dispute respecting a fall, in the time the Wrestling match is going forward.

WRESTLING

This is to give notice, that there will be a Match at _____ at the sign of the _____ on by Men, first best man to receive _____ the second best to have _____ and the third best _____ and every standing the first round, have each. N.B. No sham allowed. Where all Gentlemen and others, with civil usage and a hearty welcome, by there humble servant, A.B

Page 11

RULES AND ORDERS.

Article I

That the company, or part of them, being met at the appointed time, at the house specified in the Circular hand bill, some person ought to be employed to take down the names of those who wish to wrestle for the above mentioned prizes, an hour, at least, before the appointed time is come to begin playing;

II

That after the persons appointed has taken down the names of the wrestlers, to the number stated in the circular bill, they shall be cut off into

tickets and doubled up single, as near as like as possible, and put into a box, or, &C. inclosed, and in that like way and manner, carried to the ring place, & C. intended for the contest.

Page 12

III

That on the persons entering the ring, with the tickets, they must stop for a few minutes till all the spectators are a little matter stationed, and one or more of the wrestlers have an opportunity to observe that the tickets are drawn fairly; which ought to be, to prevent disputes be done by two different persons.

IV

That as soon as the two persons are drawn, that are to play the first fall, they shall be immediately called aloud for around the ring, until they both answer to their names; and either or both of them shall, if required, satisfy each other that he have only on pair of stockings on his legs and nothing else to prevent blows from kicking; and at the same time their shoes shall be fairly examined, by one or more of the spectators, to see that they are equally fair, as no nailed shoes are allowed to be

Page 13

played with, on any account whatever. The combatants shall each provide himself with a good jacket, and the ring shall be ordered to be immediately cleared, and while the first couple are playing their fall, another couple shall be drawn in readiness, to begin playing when that is over; and so on in every succeeding fall.

V

That the two men on setting too, shall each of them take fair hold, and go to work as soon as they like, if not, as soon as they can; and do their best, till one be indisputably brought to the ground by his adversary But if it so happen that they shall play the best of half an hour, viz. sixteen minutes and upwards, and one draw a Trippet at the other, or hank him in any way whatever, so as they both fall disputably, that fall shall be played over again, or decided by tossing, or in some other manner. But, on the other band, after playing the above-mentioned time, and one catch his adversary a good visible clear Loose Leg, and fall, disputably, with his adversary, the man that first catch, shall be the conqueror;

because as I before observed, it not being sound and safe play he hazard it, and by that means rid the fall, which might possibly have lasted some time when it would afford not the least amusement to the amateurs, after playing that length of time; but if this takes place in less than sixteen minutes, after the first Commencement, the fall in dispute to be played over again, in either of both cases.

VI.

The first second, and third rounds being over according to the Articles, as above stated, then comes die contest for the separate prizes: which if twenty-four men play, it comes all right; only he that is left out, as you may term it, for second best, stands the best chance of winning the prize. But if sixteen men play, it must come to the fourth; and he that gets nothing may perhaps undergo as much or more hardship, as he that wins the third best prize; which in my opinion ought to be shared between the third and fourth best men.

VII

That after the Wrestling match is over, and the prizes he decided upon, the Wrestlers shall all repair to the public house, from whence the wrestle was made, and ought to have a room to themselves, if it could be made convenient, in order to dress one another's legs, if occasion requires it; and to spend what is customarily allowed to be spent, out of the prizes Viz., if it be to, or near the value of One Pound, the man that wins the first prize, shall spend two shillings and sixpence the second best, eighteen pence; and the third best, one shilling. Every man that plays in the king, ought to spend sixpence; but the standing men, the first round, are compelled to do it, or it may be stopped out of their entitled standing money, when it is paid them; which is not obliged to be done till half past nine or ten o'clock in the evening, without the Land-lord's please, in order that it may keep his company together; but if some be obliged to go home, or elsewhere, before they receive their money, due to them, they may leave word what person they would have their money paid to, or it is not obliged to be paid to anyone, till the man actually come for it himself In my beginning, when I first

began, to write this short treatise, on the Art of Wrestling,

Page 16

I had it in contemplation to write the history of my whole life altogether; but on reconsideration I found it would be of no Service to myself much more to other people; for what Service would it be to them, only for Curiosity, to know who I am, and what I was? And to have an account of my birth and parentage; for what is it to them, whether I was born at Yarmouth or Norwich; whether my father was a fat man, or lean man; a cobbler, or a person *of* independent fortune? And whether I was born on a Sunday or a Monday? When perhaps it does not signify to many, whether I had been born at all, and therefore I forbear giving any further account of myself at present: but in order, as I hope, to oblige my readers, I have inserted the following lines; just to let them know how, and in what manner, I first became to be a Wrestler; and if by chance, on the perusal of them, any of my readers laugh till they lay down, I hope they will be so ingenuous as to own the fall, which answereth the design and the very end of this my undertaking.

Page 17

When wrestling that I first began,
'Twas years before I was a man,
As well in size as was in years,
As very plainly it appears;
And before thirteen years in life I'd spent,
I'd leave either marbles or the balls,
To put in tickets to play falls,
For apples or some other things,
As manly as they do in rings.
Although large boys I their master got,
Scarce one would play, that was their lot.
To be drawn, 'gainst me, in any *wise*,
But would give the fall to share the prize.
When But when for home why I did go,
Which was but once a week or so;
It generally being market day,
My father he was out the way;
By mother I was sure to get a scolding,
Because my jacket was rent by holding;
And father shown on: Sunday morn,
My clothes to see, where they were torn;
And he, poor soul, would only smile,
But mother would chatter all the while.
About such villainy for to rend them,

And the time my sister took to mend them,

Page 18

And said, this jacket cost shillings thirty,
Is spoil'd and likewise waistcoat dirty,
That 'tis no more fit to be seen,
And as for washing, why 'twill ne'er come clean

This happen'd on a certain Sunday,
The day before call'd Whitsun Monday,
Father and I agreed for walking,
To see a wrestle at Limpenhoe Falcon,
As he understood there would be seen,
Such work as not for years had been.

Monday three o'clock drew nigh,
Off set father, so did I;
So father and I we trudg'd along,
And soon were join'd by many in throng,
And 'twas all the talk as we were going,
About who'd win the prize, and so on:

One said, such a one is coming
I know, and am certain he's a rum one;
Another reply'd, why I know two
Will stand the kicking till all is blue
That are a coming, as I do hear;
We shall see some work we need not fear.

So we got there and stood about,
And heard the names aloud call'd out,
Of all the wrestlers who were to play;

Page 19

And now and then could hear one say,
There's only one more wanting now;
In all my life ne'er saw such tow.
The number down and box'd all flair
To Kettle hole they all did repair,
And the sharpest wrestle it was I vow,
That e'er I see from then till now.
One man got kick'd so in four rounds,
That in very few days died of his wounds,
As fine a fellow, I do declare,
A little owing to drink and proper care;
But while a wrestling could hear folks say,
That's the lad if you like for play;
And now and then bear them talk and laugh out,
That boy very soon will put them half out.
The wrestle was not o'er till after nine,
So we just got home in good bedtime;
And mother did at father rattle,
As fast as e'er her tongue could prattle,
Concerning what might be the case,

In taking the boy to such a place,
And said, 'twas entirely out of pardon,
To show the boy so much blackguarding;
As it certainly would turn up his ruin,
The course of life, he was pursuing.

Page 20

My father said little, I said less,
To prepare for bed I did undress:
It was no use my being in bed,
For all the wrestle was in my head,
Ay, every fall, I verily think,
That for hours kept me from sleeping a wink,
Not only that night but many more,
I could say, at least, a score;
That whether I was awake or sleeping, Wrestling
upon my mind was creeping;
And in the morning might be seen,
That I all night had wrestling been;
For no clothes was there upon the bed,
Either off my feet, or o'er my head:
You could 'not wonder at this you'll say,
Considering wrestling all the day;
With boys some bigger, and some smaller, Some
pulky chaps, the others taller,

Did ne'er escape me that until when,
I got to play amongst the men;
And then the boys that I had play'd,
To wrestle with me did seem afraid,
Which fill'd me full of pride I vow,
Its remaining in me even now.
And from 'that time I do declare,

21

A wrestle took place scarce anywhere,
But what I went if poss'bly could,
And for the prize I firmly stood,
And as I so well did bear the kicking,
They nam'd & call'd me the game chicken;
And so they call me to this day,
Although I scarce or ever play
But to give up I will determine
No more on this to make a sermon,
No longer run on in own self-praise;
It don't look well, as most men says;
And as the theory I've been giving,
The practical part it is me leaving;
No longer on them. I mean to dwell,
And so to both I bid farewell.