

DEATH OF MR. ALEXANDER GRAY.

To those who remember Golf and golfers at St. Andrews about the early seventies the above announcement, made on the authority of recent Cape papers, will come with a shock of surprise, and regret will be intensified by the fact that the deceased gentleman had but reached an age usually associated with the full prime and vigour of life. The *Cape Argus* says:—

“The death of Mr. Alexander Gray, K.N.L., manager of the National Bank of the South African Republic, which took place on Saturday night, proved a severe shock to his many friends. Mr. Gray had travelled the world over, and was one of the most notable figures in Cape Town from his great height, whilst his genial, almost Bohemian, qualities secured him the affection of hosts of his fellow-citizens, by whom his death is lamented. Mr. Gray, who was fifty-four years of age, died of paralysis of the brain.” The *Cape Times*, which has a similar notice, mentions that Mr. Gray was in his fifty-fourth year. It adds:—“Previous to coming here he held a Dutch Consul-Generalship, and was presented with the Netherlands decoration of K.N.L.”

Mr. Gray's stature was, as compared with ordinary man, immense, if memory can be trusted, six feet eight and a-half. Like most giants, he endeared himself to everybody by a charmingly unaffected geniality of disposition; a right good fellow, he was a favourite wherever he went. The present writer is under the impression that he has somewhere written about Mr. Gray as a golfer, but cannot recall the reference. Perhaps, however, as a last tribute of friendship a repetition, if it be so, of one or two incidents which linger in the memory may be pardoned.

Mr. Gray, it has been said, was of immense height, nevertheless, so well was he proportioned, that the fact somehow did not seem unduly obtrusive; only when he came to drive a Golf ball did one begin to realise the enormous advantage his stature gave him. A perfect swing was his, full, graceful, and without effort, formed on St. Andrews models; thus, as the club descended with grand sweep from such a height, it may readily be imagined, that his were “bonny licks” and no mistake—in fact he speedily became a by-word, and an exclamation “The Giant's awa'” was sufficient to attract the caddies in dozens to the first tee. The fun came in when Mr. Gray failed to find the centre of the club in proper application to the ball, and the thing to whistle for at the first tee was a strong west, or south-west wind; then a little slice, and away! miles, as it seemed to the imagination, into the briny waters of St. Andrews bay, would the gutta fly, to the unbounded delight of all spectators, and to the unfailing enjoyment of Mr. Gray himself.

That was the period when young Tommy Morris and Davie Strath were at the heyday of their fame; a “long drive” competition was proposed, but the only conditions upon which they would enter against Mr. Gray were, not that the one longest shot should win, but that the aggregate of a certain number should be counted. They, of course, would have hit all their shots to the value of the club, whereas Mr. Gray only occasionally put in one of his very best. For this reason, and owing to the fact that he was an indifferent short-game player, he never attained first-class rank in his generation, though, of course, by reason of his terrific driving power, he was always an antagonist to be treated with respect. The above suggested competition never took place. On one occasion Mr. Gray was playing a foursome, having as his partner a gentleman who knew indeed what Mr. Gray could do in the way of driving, but had never seen him play. The weaker player in those days always drove off at the first tee; the gentleman in question topped his shot, which ran a short distance over the road; Mr. Gray called for his “light iron”; “Dear me,” said his partner, “I should have thought such a long driver might have risked the burn;” Mr. Gray, however, carried the burn, and laid the ball dead at the hole. He used to play a good deal with a club which, by a *façon de parler*, he designated a “short spoon;” save the mark; in length and general attributes it more resembled the weaver's beam of Scripture, being much longer than the usual play-club owned by the man in the street; his iron niblick, too, was of about the same length, wherewith he was wont to smite the whins right parlous whacks, for he often visited them. But his “short spoon” was (in the writer's opinion) his best club; with it he

made fewer mistakes, and kept the line fairly well. Once, going to the second hole, on the left, his ball was about the rushes; with this “short spoon” he drove a long way into the Clifton Bank field; not that this is a very felicitous illustration of the way to keep the line; but for distance the shot was remarkable. In medal play he was of too anxious a temperament. Thus, having driven from the tee on to the green at the third hole, he was nearly, if not quite, in double figures by the time he had holed out. An exclamation of impatience having once escaped his lips, a drive not having been so “sweet” as he seemed to expect, an onlooker had the curiosity to measure it, and announced the distance as 276 yards—a very fair miss. Certainly Mr. Gray's best shots, though never properly measured, have not been surpassed by any player of later days—the pity is that they and he remain but as a memory.

H. S. C. EVERARD.

BRADFORD GOLF CLUB.

The Bradford Golf Club has just been celebrating its fourth annual dinner, following close upon the annual meeting, and both events have shown the club to be in a satisfactory condition. There are about 200 members, a goodly number having been enrolled during the past year. Considering the amount of money spent on the links on Baildon Moor the finances are also in a fairly satisfactory state. The revenue account shows an expenditure of some £33 over receipts, but over a hundred pounds has been paid off on account of the club-house. The club wisely seeks to increase the interest in its affairs by changing most of its officers each year, so it comes about that Mr. J. W. Cockerham, who has been a most popular president, has given place to Mr. J. H. Ackroyd, and Dr. Macvie has been succeeded in the captaincy by Mr. E. R. Wethey, a first-class player and a popular scholastic golfer. Mr. G. Herbert Blackburn has made so good a secretary that the members will not allow him to resign, but as his co-secretary, Mr. A. Rushworth Hill, has entered into an “engagement” of another kind which is expected to occupy a good deal of his time most happily, he had to be excused, and Mr. G. Gilbert Thompson has agreed to take Mr. Hill's place. The club may accordingly be considered again well officered.

There were over forty members, and a few friends, present at the dinner, which was excellently served at the Midland Railway Hotel, Bradford, on Friday, January 29th. Col. Lassen proposed “The Bradford Golf Club,” and said that although he knew absolutely nothing about Golf, he did know something about the Bradford Golf Club and its members. He had done something to increase its membership—a remark that was received with laughter and applause—and he would ever be ready to do anything he could to promote the prosperity and success of the club. Mr. Ackroyd, in his reply, congratulated the members on the continued prosperity of the club, and said he was quite sure that Golf had come to Bradford to stay. The Bradford Club had taken an honourable place in Yorkshire Golf ever since its commencement and no Yorkshire team would be complete without at least two members of the Bradford club. They had failed to secure Championship honours, but had been very near doing so, and he hoped that this year would see one of the Bradford golfers in the Championship list. The Yorkshire Championship meeting was rendered noteworthy by the fine play of those ardent veterans, Dr. Macvie and Mr. H. Steel, and of that promising young player, Mr. A. E. Lassen, who had a promising golfing career before him that would be pleasing to his father Colonel Lassen. During the past year the club had made an arrangement with a young local club, the Pennithorne Club, that would, he hoped, be of mutual advantage to both bodies. Playing, as they did, over a more or less public moor, they were apt to be a little irritated occasionally by people wandering aimlessly about and getting unnecessarily into their way; as golfers, he asked them to be patient and submit to a little inconvenience for the general good. Some people said it was not Golf that they played at Baildon, but despite all the complaints about the course he maintained that nowhere could they get greater variety than they did at Baildon. They were constantly making improvements, and he thought the time would soon come when even those who now made excuses for poor play by blaming the course, would be glad to accept a welcome invitation to play at Baildon. He heartily wished that the present year might be a happy and prosperous one for the golfers of Bradford.

Dr. Macvie proposed the health of the retiring president, and said that there never had been a president of the club who had filled the position so worthily. No links in Yorkshire, he said, had produced so much good golfing talent as Baildon Moor.

Mr. Cockerham delivered a racy speech in reply. With mock modesty he declared that he had a feeling of depression. He was extremely sorry to give up the presidency, and he would not have given it