

# GREEN FIELDS.

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“Ticket, sonny?” observes a highly realistic, up-to-date specimen of the British tripper. “’Ere you are; ’Arwich to the ’Ook,” and he passes along the gangway, followed by what appears to be a ceaseless, never-ending stream of passengers. It takes a bit of doing to get everybody aboard the good ship Amsterdam, the process being closely similar to sheep-herding, with about the same amount of comfort—for the sheep. But we settle down somehow, and, by the time I am on deck with an after-dinner cigar, are slipping out past the big lights, with the water like a mill-pond, a full moon, and a temperature that vividly recalls the Red Sea in June—a reminiscence rendered more familiar still by the sight of the passengers bunking down, in the lightest of light habiliments, for the night wherever a chance offers of catching a breeze. At early dawn the Hook, lying hot and sultry, received us, and passed us on to an equally hot and sultry Hague, where, collecting bag and baggage, we boarded trams—object lessons, by the way, as regards speed and comfort—and ran down to Scheveningen and fresh air. The Dutch champion at golf—and a few other things as well, believe me—was awaiting us; and it was only by adopting the sternest measures and putting our feet down that we saved ourselves from being hauled off then and there to the golf course. Keen? I never met such a man! Regretfully falling in with our views, he nobly permitted us a tub, a shave, and a breakfast. He would call for us at ten, so he would. And he did, to the tick.

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“With your permission, gentlemen,” said the Champion, when he had dragged us out, “I will drive, and show you the line to the hole.” And as, when perched upon the first tee at Scheveningen, you are surrounded by sand of sufficient depth and richness to fix up a new Sahara, we thanked him kindly and awaited his lead with more than ordinary interest. He drove a hummer—into the sand; and I followed with like result. The Banker put in a real fizzer, one “out of the bag,” and found the same old sand; whilst the one and only “Ryder,” zealous for his country’s reparation, gripped his fishing-rod, set his teeth, and, grimly observing that if there was a patch of grass anywhere about he’d find it or burst a blood-vessel, drove a ball that would have made Mr. “Ted” Blackwell groan with envy, and got into sand up to his neck!

be so, for the remaining six holes are, in their way, excellent, and offer great possibilities of a really good course. During the week the ladies—hats off to them!—presented a very beautiful prize to be played for under handicap, which was won by a local player, and, very properly, remains in the country; and as this event and the meeting generally have probably given a stimulus to the game, it only requires an expenditure of money and energy on the course to render it playable at Scheveningen under very favourable conditions.

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What a world this is for idols broken and illusions scattered! For many years—long before I could tell a brassie from a niblick—I had been given to understand that the fair land of Holland was the original abiding place and home of golf, and I have ever taken a delight in explaining to listeners, more or less bored, that the quaint figures, armed with quaint weapons, adorning Dutch tiles, represented the fascinating game being practised in Holland somewhere about the time of Noah. And now here at the Hague, the fountain-head for information on the subject, this long-cherished idea of mine is laughed to scorn! Golf? Well, I made them tired! Couldn't I see that the figures in question were standing on ice? And were they likely to have risked spine-shattering falls endeavouring to drive off that sort of tee? Not a chance. They might have been portrayed indulging in early Dutch hockey, or pre-historic bandy, or, in the settlement of some small family matter, were merely welting each other over the head. But golf—no! That might do for the United Kingdom, but in Holland they weren't taking any. Well, well, we live and learn; and though I suppose it will make no manner of difference a hundred years hence, still, I'm a trifle worried when I think of the dozens of unsuspecting friends I have deceived about those tiles.

“The programme for to-day, my friends,” explains the Champion, bursting in upon us at breakfast—in his anxiety to tear us about and keep us moving he rarely lets us out of his sight—“is as follows: A morning round at Scheveningen”—we paled at the suggestion—“lunch at the club; a round or two at Klingendal, just to get your hands and eyes in for the meeting there; dinner at the hotel, after which you can smoke a cigar and watch the Queen’s birthday fireworks. After that we will drop into the concert and listen to the finest orchestra in Europe; after that we will take a look at the circus and the ballet; a snack of supper at