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# THE HAPPY GOLFER

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TORONTO

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# THE HAPPY GOLFER

*BEING SOME EXPERIENCES, REFLECTIONS, AND  
A FEW DEDUCTIONS OF A WANDERING PLAYER*

**BY HENRY LEACH**

**AUTHOR OF  
"THE SPIRIT OF THE LINKS," "LETTERS OF A MODERN GOLFER,"  
ETC.**

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[Pg 1]

# CHAPTER I

## THE SEVEN WONDERS OF GOLF, AND THE ABIDING MYSTERY OF THE GAME, WITH A THOUGHT UPON TRADITIONS AND THEIR VALUE.

The first of the seven wonders of golf is a mysterious fascination that it sets towards mankind, from which, overwhelming and enduring, no people are immune. The game seizes men of all ages, of every nationality, all occupations, dispositions, temperaments—all of them. The charm acts upon men and women alike. Sometimes we have suspected that males are more whole-hearted golfers; but there are circumstances of quick recurrence to cause a doubt, and even were there none the fancied difference would be capable of explanation. It has nearly become an established rule that they golf the most who golf the last, for there is no man of the links so keen, so simple and humble in his abandonment to the game, as he who but lately held aloof and laughed, with many a gibe upon the madness of the class. Savages have attempted golf and found they liked it, and the finest intellects are constantly exercised upon its difficulties. So this diversion, pastime, game has become a thing of everywhere and everybody as no other sport of any kind has ever done. The number of people who play no golf decreases daily, and events of the last ten years have shown that its supremacy as the chief of [Pg 2] games is sure. It is clear, indeed, that, so far as the numbers attached to it are concerned, it is still only at its beginning, in toddling infancy. A few years hence its intimate part in general life will be better realised; even now you do not so frequently ask a man of movement and intelligence whether he plays golf or not as what his handicap may be and what kind of ball he likes the best. No other game or sport exercises anything like such power of fascination upon its people as this. A tennis-player may leave tennis if he must; the cricketer often voluntarily gives up cricket for no compelling reason; a man of the hills and moors may cease to care for shooting; and one who has made an automobile speed like the wind along the roads may sell his car and be motorist nevermore. But the golfer will and must always golf, and never less but more while strength permits. Men who go to the sea in ships take golf clubs with them; I have known golfers carry their materials into deserts, and one of the greatest and noblest explorers the world has known took them with him to one far end of earth. Surely this is a very remarkable thing, a feature of life that is strange as it is strong, and it is not nonsense to suggest that this is no ordinary game and cannot be considered as a game like others. Somewhere in a mysterious way it touches the springs of life, makes emotions shake. It grips; it twitches at the senses. Why?

No person has yet answered that question well and with decision, though many have attempted to do so in written words, and ten thousand times and more have players in their talk touched upon the lasting problem, and then, with that natural human avoidance of the impossible, have shuffled off to some topic more amenable. Here, it seemed, was one of the mysteries of life, and these are such as it is better not to meddle [Pg 3] with. So through neglect and our timidity the problem has seemed to deepen. It has become the Great Mystery. Wonder and awe are thick about it. Men who were innocent and have turned to golf do not give a reason why; they are silent to the questioner. They say that he too will see in time, and then they golf exceedingly. Surely, then, this Great Mystery of its fascination is the first of the seven wonders of golf; and it is appropriate enough that a game that covers the world and embraces all mankind should have special and well-separated wonders numbering seven like the seven others of the earth at large: the traditions of the game, its amazing ubiquity, St. Andrews, the short putt, the achievements of golfers, and the rubber-cored ball are the other six. Each has its well-established place, and between the seventh of the group and the eighth, being chief of the thousand minor wonders, there is a wide separation.

It is not for one poor atom in a great and complex golfing world to put forward with any look of dogma a suggested solution to this subtle mystery which the philosophers have probed so long and fruitlessly. He will subscribe with others in a consoling renunciation to the view that it is not for human mortals, who should be happy with delights that are given them, to tear down veils from the faces of hidden gods. But as a theory—shall we say?—he may advance an explanation which is satisfying to one who has wondered as much as any others and inquired as often during many years, while yet it still leaves a place for mystery and a suggestion of eternal doubt. And the chief difference between this theory and others that have preceded it is that this is what might be called Collective while the others have commonly been theories of single ideas.[Pg 4] Philosophic research towards the solution of the mystery hitherto has been almost exclusively based upon the supposition of there being one peculiar unknown cause for the amazing fascination, a magnificent *x*, something that in our present imperfect state of knowledge could hardly be imagined, but which has been vaguely conceived to be connected in some ways with the senses—and maybe the spirit. We have known that in some mysterious and it has seemed almost supernatural way the emotions have been stirred, most deeply shaken, by the pursuit of golf, and the case has seemed so inexplicable that the existence of an overwhelming unknown factor for the cause has been suspected. Here investigation has naturally faltered. I myself for long enough was inclined to the possibility of the single-cause theory being correct, and with devotion was attached to that "Hope" suggestion which satisfied most requirements and went far towards an explanation of all the mysteries. That this doctrine, whose merits shall be considered, is largely correct, that it does account for much of the mystery, I am well convinced; but we who have studied in the latest schools of philosophy are now unwilling to believe that it accounts completely for everything, that, in fact, this hope, which the circumstances of the game cause to flame continually in the golfer's mind like the great human passion that it is, is the one and only Force of golf, though it is almost certainly the major force of a group and dominates the others. Our new idea for a solution to the grand mystery is that there is a number of forces or causes of widely different character but associated in complete harmony for the production of strong emotional effects in the mind of the subject—emotions of the simplest and most natural character, but, like others touching at the mainsprings of life, in their action most intense. In a simple, unanalytical, and rather unphilosophical way, the[Pg 5] game of golf has often been compared to the game of life, just indeed as other games and pursuits have been pointed for comparisons with the process of human existence. So we have been exhibited as starting in life at the teeing ground, abounding in hope and possibility. The troubles, ills, and worries that have soon afflicted us have been found their counterparts, all the analogies made to suit the careful people who play short of hazards and enjoy a smooth existence, the bold adventurers who brave long carries and like best the romantic road, the deep bunkers of misfortune, the constant menace of the rough for those who hesitate upon the straight and narrow way, the unexpected gifts of Providence when long putts are holed, the erratic inclination of the poor human when the little ones are missed. But now we find that in a far deeper and more consequential way this sympathy between golf and life exists, and that in this gentle play there is a repetition in lighter tones of the throbbing theme of existence.

In the strong action upon the emotions which takes place during the practice of the game there are effects which are purely physical and others which are largely mental and spiritual. The physical thrills of golf are above the comprehension of any man or woman who has not played the game. We are certain that in the whole range of sport or human exercise there is nothing that is quite so good as the sublime sensation, the exquisite feeling of physical delight, that is gained in the driving of a golf ball with a wooden club in the manner that it ought to be driven. This last provision is emphasised, for this is a matter of style and action, and the sensuous thrill is gained from the exertion of physical strength in such a mechanically, scientifically, and physically perfect manner as to produce an absolute harmony of graceful movement. It is as[Pg 6] the satisfaction and thanks of Nature. Sometimes we hear sportsmen speak of certain sensations derived from particular strokes at cricket, others of an occasional sudden ecstasy in angling, and one may well believe that life runs strong in the blood when a man shoots his first tiger or his first wild elephant. But the feelings of golf are subtler, sweeter, and that we are not stupidly prejudiced or exclusive for the game may be granted if it is suggested that we reach some way to the golf sensations in two other human exercises, the one being in the dancing of the waltz when done thoroughly well and with a fine rhythmical swing, and the other when skating on the ice with full and complete abandon. In each case it is a matter of perfect poise, of the absolute perfection of co-ordination of human movement, of the thousands of little muscular items of the system working as one, and of the truest rhythm and harmony being thus attained. We come near to it also in some forms of athletics; we have it suggested in the figures of the Greek throwing the discus. In golf there is an enormous concentration of this effect in the space of a couple of seconds—not too long to permit of becoming accustomed to it, not too short for proper appreciation. In this brief time, if the driving is properly done as Nature would have it, the emotional sensation is tremendous. Again one insists on the method and manner, for, especially in late years, ways of driving have been cultivated as the result of the agreeability of the rubber-cored ball, in which the physical movements are restricted and changed, and

nearly all of the thrills are lost. It is still, even then, a fine thing to drive a good ball; there is peculiar satisfaction and a sense of smooth pleasure felt in doing so; but it is not that great whole-body thing that is enjoyed when there is the long swing and the full finish. That is why, even if style be so difficult to attain[Pg 7] and there are ways of playing which are far easier to cultivate and more certain of their good results, it is worth all the pains and study expended in acquiring it, and a hundred times again, for the pleasure that comes afterwards. In the winning of holes or in the making of low scores the driving may be a comparatively unimportant part of the play, as it is said to be, though a certain high standard of efficiency is demanded continually; but it will always be the favourite part of the game because it appeals so much to those physical emotions, stirs them up so violently, rouses the life of the man, and lifts him for a moment to a full appreciation of the perfection of the human system. Some of these emotions are experienced in a minor key when playing the short game, as we call it, particularly in finely-made pitching strokes with iron clubs. Here there are restraint and sweetness; it is as if we listen to the delicacy of Mendelssohn after the strength and stateliness of Beethoven. Undoubtedly there are keen physical sensations enjoyed in this part of the play. When it comes to the last and shortest strokes, to the putting, only a faint trace of action upon the physical emotions remains, and the pleasure and satisfaction—if any—that are gained are purely mental. So in the short space of five minutes, in playing one hole of fair length, we may run along a full gamut of emotions, and herein is a great part of the joy of golf.

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This, however, would be insufficient. The strong, self-controllable man would not, in their absence, crave for these emotions. But other influences are at work to kindle and continue the golfing fever in him. For the highest and deepest pleasure of civilised and cultivated man a combination of the best physical and[Pg 8] mental emotions—with a little disappointment and grief—is essential; one without the other is always unsatisfying. Here, foremost among the mental experiences, so powerful as to have a certain physical influence, is our Hope. The major force of all life is hope. It is life itself, for without it the scheme of human existence would collapse. To look forward, to anticipate, to hope for better things, and believe in them—that is the principle of life. It is for that reason that the atheist comes so near to being an impossibility. An incredible he is. He asserts himself not only as an ignorer of gods but as a rejecter of Nature, and his position is untenable, impossible. He endeavours to place himself outside the scheme of creation. Without hope man could not and would not continue. He would give up. Motive would have vanished, and motive is essential to action. We strain analogy to no extravagance when we hold that it is the same in golf. It is pervaded with hope, lives on it, is played with it, depends upon it throughout in its every phase. At the beginning of the day's play a man hopes for great achievement. He does not ignore the possibilities, and rarely, whatever his temperament and disposition, does he wait for events, content in a manner of perfect wisdom to take things as they come. He anticipates, and in the human way he builds castles made of thoughts, and in his calculations overlooks existing facts and past experience. Thus are charm, eagerness, and romance given to life and the game. Never yet was golfer who did not believe that now his great day might come.

So on the first teeing ground there is hope in the highest. Should the first stroke be successful the hope is stimulated; if the stroke is bad the hope is intensified. In the one case something more of the human power of man, the strong right arm and the fingers[Pg 9] deft, is poured into the physical and temperamental boiler where the forces are being generated. The success has increased probability, the man can a little the more stand by himself, his independence increases, and his hope has a rock of fact beneath it. In the other event, the first drive having been a failure—as, alas! with the wearinesses of waiting and the anxieties they engender, first drives so often are—the hope is intensified by the addition of highly concentrated faith. The element of the practical indefatigable man is slightly reduced, and in its place there is filled the sublimer, grander essence of spirituality that is so far above the merely human. The hope is not the less. Providence is brought into the schemes, and the heart lives well. If the second shot is a good one there is more of the human given to the hope and the spiritual is a little subdued again; if the stroke should fail there is something like another mute appeal subconsciously made to Providence.

These are the hopes of strokes. There are the hopes for holes; the hopes for days; the hopes for seasons, each series being units made of collections as years are made of months and days are made of hours. One who loses the first hole hopes to win the second, and is even insincere, for the encouragement of his hope, in saying and trying to believe that to lose the first hole does not matter and is often an advantage. If the second is lost there is a coming equality in the match imagined for the fourth or fifth. Three or four down at the turn, even five, and the man still lives and hopes (he is no golfer if he does not), and there have been magnificent struggles made when players have been six down with seven to play, or have even been dormy five to the bad. He who has only lost the first hole holds his hope in a state that is highly charged with belief in his own human capacity; he who is dormy down when the match is far from home still keeps hope,[Pg 10] is buoyed well with it, but he does his best

in a half-cheerful, half-nervous way, knowing that the time for supreme human endeavour has passed, and he gives the matter over to kind Providence, submitting that his deserts are good. So one who has played badly in the morning hopes for success in the afternoon; and where is the man who, having made poor shots all the day and lost holes and matches by them, does not fall to sleep at night consoled and peaceful in reflecting upon a discovery that will make full amends upon the morrow? After the failures of a summer season hopes arise for better fare when cool autumn makes the play more pleasant; when there has been one whole bad year there is hope enough that the game will mend in the time that follows.

In this way it is hope all through, hope always, in the beginning and the end and in the small things with the great. Hope is the most human, most uplifting of all the emotions. Banish this emotional quality from the human mind and the golf clubs would be disbanded, for the game would cease to be golf for another day. The charm would have gone completely. Only the nature of the hope sometimes varies as we have shown, and the most wonderful feature of this wonder of golf is the sublimely simple way in which the man of a match, when all seems lost, when the cause seems wholly ruined, when by nothing human does it seem that a situation hanging upon a thread so thin can possibly be saved, believes in the future still. Providence still exists for him. Every human reckoning would show that he approaches the impossible, and yet he sees it not, but only the narrow way of escape to success beyond. And there is infinite satisfaction to the soul, much that is splendidly destructive of utter materialism, in realising that often the seeming human impossibility is broken and [Pg 11] Providence pulls us through. In golf we often ask for miracles, and sometimes we obtain them. It seems to me that the golfer has one satisfying motto, and only one, and it is *Spero meliora*. What is the use of the "far and sure" that the ancients have bequeathed to us? Nearly meaningless it is. And if those words of hope are emblazoned on his coat of arms, the golfing man should have the Watts picture of "Hope" in his private chamber, courageous Hope straining for the faintest note that comes from the one lone string that remains on the almost dismantled harp.

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Such strong exercises of emotions, physical and soulful, accounting, as we may believe, for much of the fascination of the game, are supported by others, subtler but also of large effect. There are the aggravations of the game. It suggests an object that no man has ever completely achieved and never will do, since none has ever arisen to a state of skill and consistency when he plays perfect golf and plays it always, though such success may nearly be achieved at other pastimes. And it is not given to the player to know why the skill he feels himself possessed of does not bear its fruit. He is left in wonderment and aggravation. The game goads, it taunts, it mocks unmercifully. Old Tom Morris expressed the simplest overwhelming truth when he said it was "aye fechtin' against us." It does so from the first hour, the first minute of the golfer's existence as such, when he misses the ball which it had seemed so easy to strike. Then, his vanity wounded, he attacks, and the lifelong feud begins. What always seems so easy becomes the nearly impossible. There is always something new to learn, always another scrap of explanation of mystery [Pg 12] to be gathered, and the player is always groping and being taught. But he moves forward only to fall back again, and the simple consolation he has from this ever-recurring process is that the tide of discovery, when it rolls back, returns a little higher up the beach with the next wave and in the long succession there is a gain. But this process is not so regular as the running of the tide, not so much a matter of calculable natural law, and therein is the disappointment and the aggravation. A man retires to his rest at night feeling himself a good and well-satisfied golfer with rapid advancement certain, and lo! the morning will be little spent when he is shown to himself as one of the poorest and most ineffectual players. The mystery of this reaction is quite insoluble; only the cold fact is clear, convincing. No more tantalising will-o'-the-wisp is there than form at golf. It is a game that lures a man, it coquets with him, trifles with his yearnings and his hopes, and flouts him. So does it excite him, and, hurting his pride, stirs his ambition and his desire to obtain the mastery. The spirit of adventure and conquest is aroused, and the strong man who has failed in no undertaking before declares that he will not fail in this. And so, with his everlasting hope, he perseveres and will not give in. But it is the game that wins.

It appeals to the emotions of the primitive man in another way that may often be unsuspected. In essence it is the simplest and the most natural of games. It is indeed a game of Nature, and it is played not on the smoothest surfaces with white lines drawn upon them, but upon plain grass-covered earth, a little smoothed by man but still with abounding natural roughness and simplicity. Here on the links are space and freedom such as are afforded to people, especially those of towns and cities, rarely in present times. The tendency in all life now is to confine itself [Pg 13] closely. We live in small spaces, with many walls and low roofs; we move through thronged streets and by underground railways. Things are not the same as when there was the Garden of Eden and the open world outside it. His confinement is a wearing oppression to the modern man, though he may not always suspect it. Because it emancipates and gives us back a little of our lost freedom is the chief reason for the popularity of motoring, and it was to attain more freedom still that man made up his mind to fly and now flies accordingly.

We cannot entirely escape from this unnatural confinement which modern conditions of life have forced upon us, but for a little while at intervals, through the medium of this sport, we may experience the sense of space, of freedom, of the something that comes near to infinity. Unconscious of this cause, a golfer on the links is uplifted to a simpler freer self. He has a great open space about him, the wilder the better, and the open sky above. He takes Nature as he finds her, accepting her every mood, and that is why this game is and must be one for all weathers. There is the ball upon the tee. Hit it, golfer, anywhere you please! Hit it far, no limit to the distance! Strike with all your strength! Until in the game the time for wariness comes, as with the hunter upon his prey, see no limitations, accept all consequences. The golfer's freedom has a flavour that other people rarely taste.

Emotions serve the human system better than comforts and conveniences, for these emotions are the pulse of life and the conveniences are mere aids to existence. Golf, being complete, has its advantages of convenience as well as its thrilling emotions, and when the players reason to their relatives and their friends upon the good of the game, shaping their excuses for a strange excess, they exhibit with a limited[Pg 14] sincerity the real advantages and conveniences. The game may be played anywhere and everywhere. It is the same in principle, the same in rules, the same in actions; but yet again it is like a new thing everywhere, and it is always fresh. There is a golf course wherever a man may go; and there is a new experience for him always. He needs only one man to play with him; or indeed, if there is no such man available, he may play with the game itself as his implacable opponent, fight it in the open and without the medium of a human opponent to break the shocks for him. If variety is the spice of life, then here is spice enough. Then it gives us such companionship as can be gained by few other means, for it brings us to inner intimacy with the man we play, bares his hidden nature to us, strips from him all those trappings of manner and suggestion by which in the ordinary social scheme every person plays a part as on a stage and rarely is well discovered. No man plays a part in golf; his individuality, in all its goodness and weakness, is unfolded in the light. He is known entirely and for his own true self. The game gives us fresh air and the most splendid exercise. These are enormous advantages in golf, and we extol them in defence of our enthusiasm and they are accepted; yet, honest to ourselves, we know that we do not play golf because of fresh air and exercise, and indeed we only think of them as gain when, in the slavery to which we have been subject, our emotions for a day have been shivered and shocked by failure. It has the advantage that we can play it when the period of life for other games has passed, and we can play while life leaves to us but a flick of vigour. Some of the meanest men, who are barely worthy of being in this excellent community where the sense of brotherhood is so good, have been gross enough to say that[Pg 15] golf serves their professional and commercial purposes thoroughly well—as indeed it may—by giving them intimacy with valuable and helpful friends. These are men who would buy their idols and sell them for a profit of five per cent. The advantages of golf are there; but they are the accident of circumstances, or not perhaps the accident but simply like the scheme of Nature in supporting what is good with good itself; but they do not and cannot in any measure explain the mystery of the fascination of the game, for that mystery lies in the emotional, the spiritual, the psychological, and not in anything that is just material. Golf is something of a passion, and passions are of the blood and have nothing to do with conveniences and rules of life for health and plain advantage.

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The traditions of golf are the second of its wonders. All things that are old have certain traditional sentiment clinging to them, and it makes a good flavouring to life, for it is suggestive of age and time and continuity and eternity. Had golf no traditions now, those emotional effects in its subjects might be produced the same, but yet the sport would not be the same rich colourful thing that we know it to be, but something grosser. And again we could stand for golf and say that no other sport can testify to its past and present worth and greatness with such excellent tradition. Three only can rank in the same class, and those are cricket, hunting, and the turf. Their traditions indeed are rich, they uphold their sports to-day, and they abound in those rare stories which, even if they have lost nothing with time, make fine things for the listening now and have the tendency always to promote a better sporting spirit. But three[Pg 16] things are essential to good traditions, the first being acts, the second persons, and the third places, and the last of the three is far from being the least important, because birds do not love their nests more than traditions do the plots of earth where are their homes. They cannot live in space; there they would lapse to a state of film and would fade away. Give them abiding places, real solid ground upon which their delicate ghostly structures may rest, and they have a substance which gives them a fine reality. If a character of the past were invented, given a real name, all his manners and customs, his feats and follies carefully described, even his father and mother most properly identified, and a statement made of the provisions in his will for those who followed after him, that would still be likely to linger on as a character merely, a possibility of the past but a thing of no account, not an influence. He could not be placed. If we give ourselves a licence to roam the earth in search of golf, we like to think of the good men of the old traditions as being comfortably settled, as being at special places where, in our fireside fancies on winter nights when the winds are moaning and the rains are lashing against the window-panes, we can see them and sit down with them.

The wandering hero of tradition does not suit. And here is a great virtue of the people of our golfing traditions: we can catch them tight, nail them fast. We have special plots of land—the majestic links of Scotland, the old course of Blackheath, almost every yard of which might, if speechful, tell a story of some old golfer of the past. The old golfers trod those links some time in their earthly days. We know the shots they played, where balls pitched and how they ran, the bunkers where they had disasters, their amazing recoveries and the putts that they holed and missed—for even the golfers of tradition missed their[Pg 17] putts at times. We know where those golfers walked, and so the traditions are of the links and the men with the links, and the links are the same now as once. Let us then hope fervently that they may remain the same, though a hundred kinds of new balls, each farther flying than the one before it, should be invented, and such courses should be declared to be weakened and out of date. It is easy enough to invent a character, but it is not so easy to invent a links and then declare that by sea encroachments on the coast it has been swallowed up and has gone. The tale is weak and unconvincing. But invent your character, and then produce your place, and say: "He was here; his feet were on this teeing ground; here he took a divot; it was in this bunker that he was caught," and there is nothing more that is needed for complete conviction.

Having seen a little of the way in which certain potential and probable traditions of the future are now being made, I have a suspicion about some of the amazing histories of the past that have been reported to us. Such suspicions are developed in the minds of those who have themselves been parties to some exaggerations of things done on certain links, and have lived to see those exaggerations improved upon by further tellers, and of a rich story, with scarcely a base of fact, being thus established in history and made ready for a monument. Having our plots of land, with their permanent marks and milestones, it is easy to do it so, and all golfers cannot be commended for complete veracity, though their lies are tolerably honest of their kind, being, like their shots, made subconsciously, and the cause, being companionable conduct, is a good one. Listeners believe in them and so make them three-parts truth. Cricket and racing have had their splendid men, and they have had certain sorts of places, but nothing homelike, merely round patches of smooth land with[Pg 18] rails and grand stands, to which traditions can never cling like ivy to the crumbling tower. The ghost men of these old traditions were fine creatures; well did they do their work; they fought and won; but they seem lonesome creatures. They lack location, and they have no family histories and traditions of their own. They are mere particles of the past. Nearly all the men of our great traditions are heroes of fine countenance and rich character, brilliant in their individuality, with that proper touch of pride and arrogance blended with the finest old conservatism, which all good traditions should enjoy. Only the ancients of the chase are good company for them.

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It seems to me that our traditions and their associate legends might be separated into five periods. There is the primeval, the prehistoric, the most royal and ancient, the early Scottish, and the late gutty periods. Of the primeval there is no more to be said than there is of primeval man. We know the latter was born, that he did work of sorts, that he ate and slept, that in his way he lived and perhaps he loved, while certainly he died. Of the primeval golfers we are solid in the belief that they had clubs and balls, for they must have had, and they had holes or marks, for they could not have done without them. We suspect them of stymies, for only the weight of tradition has held the stymie to us still, and for its power this tradition must be far extended. Almost certainly they made their first clubs from the branches of trees, but there was nothing grand in that, for Harry Vardon and brother Tom, Edward Ray as well, all three beginning their golf in their native Jersey, did the same, and they played with stone marbles for their balls, played in the moonlight too. There would seem here to have been a tendency towards a[Pg 19] throw-back in Jersey golf; but Vardon and his associates have made an ample advance since then. Good Sir Walter Simpson, in his deep researches, leaned to a more exact and defined theory or tradition of the primeval golf, and he gaily marked for it a beginning and a place. It is attractive and it is reasonable, and this, with the theory of the spontaneous and inevitable origin of the game in many places in the early times of man, theories with living detail thickening on them, come near in quality to real tradition. Sir Walter, you may remember, supposed a shepherd minding his sheep, who often chanced upon a round pebble and, having his crook in his hand, he would strike it away. In the ordinary way this led to nothing, but once on a time, "probably," a shepherd feeding his sheep on the links, "which might have been those of St. Andrews," rolled one of these stones into a rabbit scrape, and then he exclaimed, "Marry! I could not do that if I tried!"—a thought, so instinctive is ambition, as Sir Walter says, which nerved him to the attempt. Enter the second shepherd, who watches awhile and says then: "Forsooth, but that is easy!" He takes a crook in his hand, swings violently, and misses. The first shepherd turns away laughing. The two fellows then perceive that this is a serious business, and together they enter the gorse and search for round stones wherewith to play their new game. Sir Walter Simpson was a terrible man, and he must needs work into this excellent romance the declaration that each shepherd, to his surprise, found an old golf ball, every reader knowing that they "are to be found there in considerable quantity even to this day." Then these shepherd-golfers deepened the rabbit scrape so



that the balls might not jump out of it, and they set themselves to practising putting. The stronger shepherd happened to be the less skilful, and he found himself getting[Pg 20] beaten at this diversion, whereupon he protested that it was a fairer test of skill to play for the hole from a considerable distance. When this was settled it was found that the game was improved. The players, says the theorist, at first called it "putty," because the immediate object was to putt or put the ball into the hole or scrape, but at the longer distance the driving was the chief interest, and therefore the name was changed to "go off" or "golf." In the meantime the sheep, as sheep will do, had strayed, and the shepherds had to go in chase of them. Naturally they found this a very troublesome and annoying interruption, and so they hit upon the great idea of making a circular course of holes which enabled them to play and herd at the same time. By this arrangement there were many holes and they were far apart, and it became necessary to mark their whereabouts, which was easily done by means of a tag of wool from a sheep, fastened to a stick, which, as is remarked, is a sort of flag still used on many Scottish courses in much the same simplicity as by those early shepherds. And Sir Walter wrote with reason that since those early days the essentials of the game have altered but little.

After the time of these first shepherds there were doubtless more shepherds, and the bucolics in general would be given to the game. Yet it should never be understood that even in its origins this game was one that was practised chiefly by persons of low intellectual strength. Indeed it was not. In the ancient classics there are references to ball games that bear close resemblance to primitive golf, and then when games began to appear in Holland and France that had golf in them, even though they were not golf, it was not the common people always who were most attracted. And in passing, it must be said, that while golf as we have it now is British—Scottish, if you like—and there is enough[Pg 21] authority and substance in the claim for the satisfaction of any pride seeing that the laws of St. Andrews have been for ages back the laws of the world at large, it is too much to believe that a game so simple in its essentials, so obvious and so necessary and so desirable, should have had an exclusive origin in any one country, to be copied by the others. The elements of golf must have come up spontaneously in many different parts of the world, although they were without rule, organisation, and might not have been known as a game or anything like that by those who employed them. But it was there, as eating and kissing were; and it fell to the lot of those canny and most discerning Scots to regularise it, as it were, to declare it a game and give it definiteness, and in due time to set up laws and a government, all of which were just what they should be and the best conceivable. It might not have been such a good game as it is now had it not been nurtured at St. Andrews, Leith, and Musselburgh, and in those other early cradles of the pastime; but I cannot believe that if there had been no land north of Newcastle there would have been no golf, and we should be moaning now in vague discontent for a mysterious something lost to life.

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I may adduce some circumstances from most ancient history and tradition which have not been applied to this question hitherto, but should have been, for they seem to be apposite and remarkable. In these days Ireland, with a fine spirit, is struggling for better golfing recognition, and should have it. When a game is for the world, what is the Irish Channel? The country has some very splendid links, and has produced some players—if few of them—of the finest quality; but a people who exhibit frequently a fine appreciation[Pg 22] of the spirit of the golfing brotherhood, and to the wandering player extend a hospitality of which it can only be said that it is Irish, are treated coldly in championship dignity being withheld from their courses and their not being admitted to the higher councils of the game. I remember with gratitude a very early acquaintance with the golf of Newcastle in County Down, that glorious course in the shadow of the Mourne Mountains, and with Portrush in the north, while about Dublin there are links that fear no comparison with the best of other lands. The ordinary records may indicate that there was no golf in Ireland until 1881, when what is now the Royal Belfast Club was formed; but listen to a story which is brought to me in some spirit of triumph by a friend, Mr. Victor Collins, a golfer, who practises his game, for the most part, not on any mainland but out on the Arran Isles, west of the Irish coast, out on little Inneshmor, where he lives when he is not in London, and where he has a small course of just a few sporting holes for his own delight, one which would have been as agreeable to the golfers of the prehistoric period as it is now to a modern gentleman who occasionally becomes a little tired of over-civilisation and likes to retreat to simplicity and Nature. It is a considerable change from Stoke Poges to Inneshmor, but only a poor soul would not like it for a period. In London one evening we talked of golf and Inneshmor, and he told me a legendary story, the documentary narrative of which he has since produced in the form of an extract from "O'Looney's unpublished MS. translation of the 'Tain bo' Cuailgne' in the Irish Royal Academy, Dublin." Knowing little of these matters, I quote Mr. Collins direct in saying that this is the most famous of Irish epics, and describes the war Queen Maeve of Connacht, assisted by her vassal kings of the[Pg 23] rest of Ireland, waged against Ulster to obtain a bull which was reputed to be a finer animal than the one she herself possessed. The central hero of Ulster was the famous Cuchullain, the greatest of all Irish heroes, in truth an Irish Achilles. Fergus, ex-king of Ulster, who had taken refuge with Maeve, tells her who are the champions against whom her

armies will have to contend, and these lines occur in the course of his terrifying account of Cuchullain, whose age at the time of this expedition was between six and seven: "The boy set out then and he took his instruments of pleasure with him; he took his hurly of creduma and his silver ball, and he took his massive Clettini, and he took his playing Bunsach, with its fire-burned top, and he began to shorten his way with them. He would give the ball a stroke of his hurly and drive it a great distance before him; he would cast (? swing) his hurly at it, and would give it a second stroke that would drive it not a shorter distance than the first blow. He would cast his Clettini, and he would hurl his Bunsach, and he would make a wild race after them. He would then take up his hurly, and his ball, and his Clettini, and his Bunsach, and he would cast his Bunsach up in the air on before him, and the end of the Bunsach would not have reached the ground before he would have caught it by the top while still flying, and in this way he went on till he reached the Forad of the plain of Emain where the youths were." This young Cuchullain does appear to have been appreciably better than scratch. Apparently he was going to attend something in the nature of a club gathering, and his way of getting there was much in the nature of cross-country golf with a touch of trick in it; for there are professionals to-day who make a show in their idle moments of pitching up a ball and catching it with their hands. My informer tells me that Cuchullain was [Pg 24] not confining his attention to golf alone, but doing feats of jugglery as well in order to while away the journey. "The description of driving the ball before him," he remarks, "evidently contains the germ of golf. Some years ago I saw in an illustrated paper a reproduction of a picture of a tombstone from some place in Ulster dating to the twelfth century. It was the tombstone of a Norseman. On it were a double-headed sword, the sign of his profession, and below it the perfect representation of a cleek and a golf ball, his favourite amusement. It would be interesting to make a serious search in old Irish records for further information on the game. 'Clettini' is from an Irish word for 'feather.' It was evidently a feathered javelin he hurled. 'Creduma' means 'red metal,' that is brass. Hurly of creduma therefore comes curiously near the quite modern brassey. Bunsach is a very obscure word. In middle Irish there was such a word, but it meant a kind of dagger." This discovery opens up an excellent speculation.

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The periods of the traditions of course impinge upon each other and softly blend, so that the game some way or other seems to go back continuously from now to the beginning. We have in the most royal and ancient period the Stuart kings playing their golf, and Charles the First hearing of mighty troubles to his throne perpending while he was golfing on the links of Leith; of James the Second with his court playing the golf at Blackheath and sowing seeds that were to bear amazing fruit in the south at a far-off date; of Mary Queen of Scots golfing with her favourite Chastelard at St. Andrews. There was Archbishop Hamilton, who signed the authority that was given to the Provost and magistrates of St. Andrews to put rabbits on the links, [Pg 25] which authority recognised the rights of the community to the links, more especially for the purpose of playing at "golff, futball, schuteing at all gamis, with all other manner of pastyme." This was a kind of ratification of a Magna Charta of Golf. There was Duncan Forbes, of Culloden, first captain of the Gentlemen Golfers, now known as the Honourable Company, in 1744. A marvellous man was Duncan Forbes, Lord President of the Council, and we know that he played for the Silver Club in 1745—for the last time, probably, because just then the rising of the clans obliged him to set out for the north, where he exerted himself to the utmost to prevent them from joining the cause of the Young Pretender. And here in passing let it be written that there is good cause to think that Bonnie Prince Charlie himself was the first to play real or Scottish golf on the continent of Europe, for he is believed to have had a course made for himself when in Italy, and was once found playing in the Borghese gardens, so Mr. Andrew Lang once told us. There was the wonderful William St. Clair, of Roslin, so much skilled at golf and archery that the common people believed he had a private arrangement with the devil. Sir George Chalmers painted a picture of him, which is possessed by the Honourable Company, and Sir Walter Scott wrote that he was "a man considerably above six feet, with dark grey locks, a form upright, but gracefully so, thin-flanked and broad-shouldered, built, it would seem, for the business of war or the chase, a noble eye, of chastened pride and undoubted authority, and features handsome and striking in their general effect. As schoolboys we crowded to see him perform feats of strength and skill in the old Scottish games of golf and archery." And from there the tale passes on with life and colour to the beginnings of the Royal and Ancient Club; to the activities of the early members [Pg 26] like Major Murray Belshes, and the interest of William the Fourth, whose gift medal is played for at St. Andrews to this day; to such fine gentlemen of the old school as the late Lord Moncrieff and the Earl of Wemyss; to the professionals also like the Morrisies and Allan Robertson, and old Willie Park. So on along from the ages past to such as Frederick Guthrie Tait, who gave to the modern history of golf something that glows as well as the best of the old traditions.

Now it may be said that these traditions and all the others, like them and unlike, make the game no better, and that they add nothing in yards to our driving from the tee. After a consideration I will not agree either that they make the game no better or that they add nothing to the driving. The spirits of a romantic history are a continual

influence. They give a dignity to the game which is felt right through it. Only the golfer knows how true this is. Men who look upon it lightly as a pastime before they know anything of it, learn upon their initiation, and not only learn but feel, that there is all that is mysterious, wonderful, and awe-inspiring in the game and its past, a new and deep respect is created, and there is no more beginner's lightness and nonsense. Age and solemnity, and many ceremonies great and small, have given to golf some of the attributes of a religion, and with membership of it there comes responsibility. When a new Nonconformist chapel has the same exalting influence upon the mind and sentiment of a person of intelligence and sympathies as an ancient cathedral with all its tombs and relics, and the dim pillars among which echoes seem to float and mingle with spirits of the past and the great eternity, or when the dining-room of a flat in Knightsbridge inspires and dignifies its company like the banqueting hall of some ancient castle, I will perhaps agree that the traditions of golf are of no practical effect beyond[Pg 27] that of merely preserving the game from vandalism and giving it a place above the others. Often when reflecting thus one feels that in duty to the game one's policy in matters should be "St. Andrews, right or wrong." But yet one could wish that these mighty traditions were not at times invoked for improper purposes. There is too much free and unintelligible talk about them in these modern times. They are wantonly applied to base uses; a man will urge the traditions in his favour and against his opponent when he attempts some vile procedure. When a crafty person is beaten in argument, he cries, "The traditions!" and people who speciously, and with insincerity, condemn what we may call the modern advancements of the game will murmur that the rubber-cored ball and clubs with steel faces are not according to "the traditions." Truly they are not, and those old traditions had nothing to do with gutties either; but Duncan Forbes would have rejoiced in the possession of a modern driver and mashie niblick. It is too often and absurdly assumed that the ancients used the tools they had because they were the best conceivable and most appropriate, just right in practical quality and proper sentiment. They were merely the best that had been discovered up to then. The Stuart kings might have had a happier time had they possessed some rubber Haskells to coax and lead them on.

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[Pg 28]

## CHAPTER II

### THE UBIQUITY OF THE GAME; WITH AN ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE COMMUNITY OF GOLFERS, AND A NOTE UPON THE EFFECT OF ST. ANDREWS SPIRITS.

The ubiquity of this game—being the third of the seven wonders—is remarkable, for it is played everywhere by everybody. No other sport has ever achieved such universal favour, and we may be sure that none will ever do so, because, apart from the fascination it exercises upon the people of different countries and different races, it is so strong in its simplicity—the stick, the ball, the mark, and, with them being given, the object plainly suggested. It has already been suggested that, in its essentials golf being obvious, it must have been practised from the earliest times. Everywhere the simpler emotions of man are the same, and so everywhere the game must make the same appeal when it is understood. So here, strange as it is still, we have a nearly satisfying explanation. What is yet wonderful beyond it is the fact that the regulated game with the rules and restrictions that have been agreed upon and codified by the high authorities at St. Andrews are everywhere accepted, and even in such embellishments it is the same game everywhere. Nothing can approach it in this universality. Yet that also is nearly explicable.

By a process of continuous thought and deduction[Pg 29] from observation the people of St. Andrews, past and present, have gained a code of regulations which seems most completely to satisfy the requirements of the case. It has often been urged against the numerous and lengthy laws we have that they suffer from too many niceties and too many complications, and that they represent a remarkable evolution of man-made intricacy from the one simple governing principle that the ball shall be struck by the stick, and that if the object be not achieved by the first blow it shall be struck again from the place where it then lies. In that simple principle there is all golf, and by it the game must surely have been played at the beginning. But it is the disposition of man to depart from the most absolute simplicity in the direction of what he regards as improvement upon it, and therefore bare principles get covered up with fancy wrappings, while again there is in the human species an immovable distrust of each other and a tendency towards the setting up of safeguards and protections—laws. When this is done in

different places, and by different peoples, the results also are almost certain to be widely different; and with the assistance of time and further development two peoples might at length produce two games which, originating in the same basic principle, might be in appearance, materials, and actions quite dissimilar. Nearly all ball games, indeed, must have had much the same original principle. Golf, as we know it, has had its integrity preserved, and has established its amazing universality because, despite the numerous and lengthy laws, the spirit of the game has been so completely preserved in them. Between absolute simplicity, the one natural law of golf, as we might call it, as just enunciated, and a lengthy, confusing, and sometimes even contradictory code there can be little compromise, and perfection and completeness in golfing[Pg 30] law are impossible, because no two courses are alike, no two shots are quite the same, and there can be no end to new situations until there is an end of the world and man. It sometimes seems that St. Andrews, indefatigable, pursues an impossible finality, and thereby makes difficulties for itself. That through ages and generations it has produced a code of laws, and defined the principles of a game that is accepted all over the world, and causes the same game to be played wherever the sun may shine, is not merely an achievement in intelligence and discernment, but something that suggests a grand inspiration. These are times of change, when old systems of the world are being abandoned and new ones being set in their places. It may happen, though it is as unlikely as it is undesirable, that St. Andrews itself as a governing body will fall; but nothing that ever happens to the game in the future can equal the marvel of its foundation and establishment by this authority and its associates.

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It is not without good reason that they call golf the world game now. It has alighted upon every country, and wherever it has touched it has seized. The yellow man likes it; the black man in some places has to be kept away from it, because it is found that he grows too fond of it. One day when I was golfing at the Country Club, near Boston, they showed me a most primitive kind of club that was kept with some other relics in a glass case. It had been fashioned from the branch of a tree, and with this crude implement a nigger boy in one of the southern states had not long previously driven a ball over two hundred yards. Other games are for their own countries, like the country's foods, and they would neither be suitable nor adaptable elsewhere; but[Pg 31] in its nature golf will do for all, and it has the same subtle attraction for everybody, so that what was once thought to be the "golf craze" of the British people only became the craze of the Americans too, then of the French, now of the Germans and others, and of really everybody. Its qualities and conveniences make it the only possible world game. At present in some countries it is confined to a few people of unusual distinction or circumstances, but it has been found in old and recent history that, following a beginning of this kind, the game in a new land has never languished, but that presently it has extended from the pioneers, who were probably from abroad, to the native people, and from the upper classes to the middle, and then to the lower. In France at the present time we see the game being started among the general French, and I have news that the statesmen have begun to play; yet a little while since the golf of Gaul was carried on by British only.

Recently some of us were looking over the map of the world for odd countries that might be golfless, and it appeared then that there were but four: one being the Balkan States, considering them in the piece, another was Afghanistan, a third was Persia, and, scattering the attention over the islands of the earth, one reflected that no golf in Iceland had been heard of. But shortly afterwards this brief list of lone golfless places was reduced to one. To a little gathering of friends one night an adventurous gentleman was describing the excitements of a day's rough golf that he had had one time when near to Reykiavik, and, if the course was to some extent made for the occasion, little enough did that matter then. There were some real holes, and the pioneer declared one of them to be the longest and most sporting he had ever played; and we knew he had played some good ones. So Iceland came into the[Pg 32] fold. It was discovered during the recent wars that there was golf here and there in those worrying Balkans. Then lo! the land of the Afghans was also delivered to the game, and it was the Ameer himself who was chiefly responsible, thus emulating the rulers of many other lands. He had heard of golf, had seen it, realised it, and had been fascinated. Thereupon he had a short course prepared for him in the neighbourhood of Kabul, and began to practise with royal assiduity at his driving, pitching, and putting. Humble, doubtful, and yet loyal subjects observed this done from a respectful distance, and they wondered. After a little while they perceived that it was a game, and that the chief of Afghans invariably sought with his little ball the holes that were placed upon the course. Being practical people, they conceived that they might turn the game and their royal master's fondness for it to their advantage, and thereupon began to deposit in the holes at night such petitions as they had difficulty in getting placed before the royal eyes by any other means. They believed that by their new system the Ameer was sure to see and read what was intended for him. Yet it proved that he was somewhat angered by this manner of approach, and gave orders that all petitions found in his golfing holes should be burned unread. The petitioning parties had not understood how seriously the game he played was taken, nor the deep effect it had upon the mind and the disposition of the player, else they would surely have moved craftily and warily with their prayers, and then they might have gained imperial favour. Had they seen

their ruler miss his drive, fizzle his second, put his third into the pond, slice among the trees with his fifth—even Ameers being penalised a stroke for lifting from the water—and eventually reach the putting green in nine, three more strokes then being needed, they would have been stupid Afghans had they not at a convenient[Pg 33] moment taken their petitions from the holes, or withheld them if they had not placed them there. But when an Ameer hits a good one from the tee, when his ball flies fast and straight from his royal brassey (and rulers also laugh when a topped ball runs a bunker!), when by enormous luck he lays an approach quite close to the hole, and afterwards the putt is truly played—why, many an Afghan might pray for the release of a brother from prison in Kabul, and the brother, pardoned, might be raised to office in the palace, perhaps to be an executioner. Now, if the petition had been submitted when the sovereign had done his hole in twelve, the brother might have died as arranged, perhaps the petitioner also, and who knows but that the neglectful greenkeeper, for not having seen that all holes for the day were free of pleas, would not have joined the departures for another world. Wandering players may look forward now to some future golf in Afghanistan. Have we not heard of the Shah at the game? If it cannot be proved, Persia must be left in an Asiatic golfless solitude, with the gibe against her that even celestial China has her courses, and that they are everywhere save in the Persia where Omar was, and in fine worldly philosophy bade us take good pleasures while we may.

Golf's vast ubiquity is illustrated in another case recalled by this reference to kings who play. Miss Decima Moore of the theatres has a love for roving far which has led her to many raw places of the earth for hunting and shooting and adventurous exploration when she has tired of the footlights and has longed for Nature with no mask at all. Then, being golfer too, she has wandered with her bag of clubs into many distant lands, and one morning in London, just back from Central Africa, she told me of some strange experiences of a golfing woman. She has played the game up in Uganda, and explained the quality of the[Pg 34] play of King Daudi Chwa, who is a ruler of those parts. Even once before, a colonial bishop had informed me of the golf of this dusky king. He had had some holes laid out for himself, so I was instructed, and when not engaged in duties of his kingly office, which were seemingly not onerous, he devoted himself earnestly to the reduction of his handicap and to lowering his record for his private course—upon which strangers in those parts are always welcome to a game. The bishop said that his Majesty drove an excellent ball, played his irons well, and putted with a good instinct for line and length, and the actress backed the bishop's story. In the region of the Victoria Nyanza there are no Sunningdales to be found, but the royal course of nine holes is considered a creditable thing. The king, who was lately in England and played a little here, will be glad to see any golfers who may go that way, and it may be his pleasure to call one of his holes by a name of theirs as, with a good African grace, he called one "Decima" when our English lady played it.

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These wandering golfers do bring home great stories, and others send them. A friend, poor Tom Browne, who is dead, the clever artist in black and white, sat with me once at lunch in the Adelphi, and we talked of golf in distant lands and many things concerning it, for in the morning he was going eastwards to China and Japan. He said he should play as much as possible, and he did. While at the table he drew a sketch on a piece of paper and passed it to me with a smile. It was a picture of himself leaving on a golfing holiday to those very foreign parts, with numerous bags of clubs, cases of spare clubs guaranteed for all climates, and innumerable large boxes piled up all round him, each[Pg 35] one labelled "One gross of best balls." Poor Tom always did take his clubs with him to foreign lands, and on this occasion he made good, as one might say, on that little sketch he drew at lunch by the places he played at afterwards, and queer drawings he sent to me of the courses and the people at them. He wrote from Tien-Tsin that the one they had there was just outside the town and was a flat plain covered with Chinese graves, the course being really nothing but one huge graveyard. "The Chinamen," he said in his letter, "plant their graves anywhere that suits them, and they consist of raised-up mounds which enclose the coffins. Off the graves the ball will bounce at all kinds of angles. Sometimes after heavy rains the mounds fall to pieces and expose the coffins. The golf club can remove any of these graves by buying them at four taels a coffin, and when a grave is bought in this way the native takes the coffin away, buries it somewhere else, and the grave is then flattened down. Fore-caddies are employed on this course. The 'greens' consist of baked mud, as is usual in these eastern parts, and are generally circular in shape. Chinese caddies do not understand the game and think that the foreign devils who play it are surely mad. They continually ask the players, 'When will you finish hitting and following that ball about?' And they have a local rule at Tien-Tsin that 'a ball lying in an open grave may be picked out and dropped without penalty.'"

This graveyard golf, as I know, is not at all peculiar to Tien-Tsin, for not long ago I had a letter from a British official at Chiankiang on the Yangtse River, in which he told me that they had just begun to play the game out there on a course covered with crater-like excrescences, these Chinese graves again, and he declared that they made the most excellent hazards. It should be added for their credit's sake, golfers being considerate[Pg 36] people

and mindful of others' feelings, that they carefully ascertained in this case that no Chinese sentiment was injured by play in these cemeteries, if they are to be called by such a name. Again, I recall that a little while since the golfers who have a course in the Malay peninsula went down to it one morning and found a Chinaman digging up the remains of a deceased relative from one of the putting greens, intending to remove them to China; because it is a common thing, as I am told, when a Chinaman dies abroad, for his people to inter him temporarily if they can and give him another burial in his native land when opportunity chances. There has been a great move in things in this country lately. The Government has changed; the people, according to some trade returns that I have seen, are taking extensively to smoking English cigarettes and wearing unlovely English clothes. So it is inevitable that in their vast multitudes they will one day come into golf, for a little advancement towards modern ways often leads to strikes and golf. One fears to think that when China has a championship her people may compete in such a costume as is favoured by some of the oldest and best Scottish professionals (and if asked for a name we shall mention good Sandy Herd as a captain of the class), who always wear dark trousers and a light-grey jacket to their golf. There must be some virtue in this unconventional arrangement of tints; for so many of the great are attached to it.

In other parts of Asia there is golf that is peculiar, especially in India where it flourishes to the extent of forty or fifty clubs, including those of Calcutta and Bombay, which are not merely the oldest in India but rank high in seniority among the golf clubs of the world. Both were well established before 1860, at which time there were only two or three in England, and the game was all but unknown in America.[Pg 37] Despite the fact that it was born in 1842 and was really an Indian offshoot of the famous Royal Blackheath Club, the Royal Bombay remains a little primitive in the matter of its course. It is a golf course for one part of the day and something else for the remainder, and it is perhaps the only course in the world which is dismantled daily. The fact is that it is situated on what is called the "maidan," an open space near to the European business quarter, and the golfers, having no exclusive possession of it, are not allowed to play after half past ten in the morning and are required, when they have done, to remove their hazards. This obviously necessitates unconventional obstacles, and the club has had to resort to movable screens, varying from four to ten feet high, which are put up when play begins and taken away again when it is finished. Having become accustomed to this sort of thing it ceases to annoy, and in Bombay the course is considered good and sporting, and the greens are well attended. Then up on the hills at Darjeeling there is the highest golf course in the world, for it is situated at an elevation of more than eight thousand feet above the level of the sea on the abandoned cantonment of Seneshal. Scenery often does not count for very much with golfers, and the better the golfer the keener he is on the game and the less does he care at times about the surroundings of the course. Yet, as I am told, it would be a dull poor soul that was not moved by the views from the Darjeeling course, with Mounts Everest and Kinchinjunga, both nearly thirty thousand feet high, in one direction and the plains of Bengal in another. But perhaps the most curious of the Indian courses is that of the Royal Western India Club, upon which is an idgah, or kind of temple, some thirty feet in height and fifty long, with bastions at either end and minarets in the middle. This idgah serves the double duty of [Pg 38] club-house and a hazard also, for it has to be driven over from the tee on the way to the eleventh hole, and many are the marks on its walls that were made by balls that were hit too low. The course has another peculiarity in that it possesses seventeen holes only, no amount of ingenuity being enough to scheme out an eighteenth on the land available, so one of them has to be played twice over to make up the usual eighteen. This club has its course at Nasik, and mention of the idgah reminds one that the Royal Bangkok Club of Siam used to have an old and very imposing Siamese temple for a club-house. A little while since, when travelling northwards from Marseilles through France, I met, in the restaurant car of my P.L.M. train, an officer just going home on leave from India, and he assured me that he had found no place in the country where there was no golf, and he gave me some good examples of the ingenuity and enthusiasm of the golfers there. Thus at Multam, for the betterment of their sanded putting "browns" they keep them oiled all over, so that the ball runs evenly along them, and at a reasonable pace. There is an attendant to each green, who smooths over the track that is made by every ball when putted. And my companion told me also that in the season at Gulmurg in Kashmir, where they have two courses, there is such a crowd of golfers that it is difficult to arrange starting times for all of them.

As one would expect, the game is played in Japan, and there is a highly flourishing club at Kobe, whose course is on the top of a high mountain at Rokkusan. It is a splendidly interesting course when reached, with views that can only be second in magnificence to those of Darjeeling; but for the occasional visitor the chief pleasure would seem to lie in the reaching, rather, perhaps, than in golfing on it afterwards, for the players [Pg 39] have to go by rickshaw to the foot of the Cascade Valley and are then carried up the mountain slope by coolies for an hour and a half, when at last the tees and bunkers come to view.

Thus it is indicated what great work must have been done by the pioneers of golf. They have been fine adventurers and explorers. In their strength of purpose, their resourcefulness, their enterprise and daring, and in their joy of doing beginnings, they have had some of the burning zeal and the quick inspirations of the voyagers of Elizabethan time. They too were discovering a world anew. When a golfer reaches a place afar where there is

no course, his first and most natural impulse is to make one. Sir Edgar Vincent, keen player, told me once how he and that most distinguished amateur and ex-champion Mr. J. E. Laidlay, had a considerable hand in the starting of golf in Egypt, where it is now as well established as the Pyramids and Sphinx. Sir Edgar went to Cairo, and with him took his clubs, but on arrival found there was no course whereon to play, and there was Laidlay disappointed in the same way. So they twain obtained shovels and other implements of labour, enlisted the service of native helpers, and went out into the desert, making there the first golf course of Egypt. But theirs was not the distinction of hitting the first golf ball in that ancient land. Long before then a Scottish golfing minister did it. There is no better enthusiast than these ministers, about whom the best stories are told, as of the worthy who was left muttering the Athanasian creed in the lowest depths of hell, being the bunker of that name on the old course at St. Andrews, and the other who felt he would have to give it up because he played so ill and was so much provoked—not give up the game but alas! his ministry. And so the Rev. J. H. Tait, of Aberlady, went for a golfing[Pg 40] holiday to Egypt long before the two gallants who did the spade work there, lumbered himself up to the top of the great Pyramid, and then, feeling in his pocket, curiously enough discovered an old golf ball there. To tee it up, to address it with the handle end of his umbrella, and to despatch it earthwards to Egyptian sand with the thwack of an honest east-coast swing, was the labour of no more time than would be needed to recite a verse of Psalms.

A whole book having been written on Australian golf we may leave it unconsidered here. Hardly an island but there is a links upon it. The other day, when I had myself but just come back from foreign golfing parts, I was mated for the game on a London course to one who told me he had only then returned from Fiji, where his last game was at Suva and was a foursome in which the local bishop, the attorney-general, the chief trader, and himself were engaged. He explained the part that was played by *mimosa pudica*, being the "sensitive plant," in the golf of the Fiji islanders. When this herb is touched by anything, its leaves droop and close upon the object, and, *mimosa pudica* being all over the fairway of the course, balls would be too often hidden and lost but for the agile caddies who are sent in front to watch for them. In these days one is hearing frequently of travellers' tales like this.

Spain having been captured by the game, as I shall relate in time, there is little need to dwell upon the other conquests of golf in Europe. In Germany it is fast advancing, and the German Golf Association, which publishes a German Golf Year-Book, is an enterprising body. The Kaiser has encouraged the game, and has given land for it. At Baden Baden they have given the most valuable prizes to professionals; at Oberhof, in the Thuringen Forest, there has been made under the guidance of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg one of[Pg 41] the nicest courses a German need wish to play upon, and the girl caddies in pretty uniform are the most picturesque alive. In Norway and Sweden, in Denmark, and nearly everywhere there is golf, and much of it. It flourishes in Italy, as is to be shown in a later chapter. Even in Russia you may golf. Both St. Petersburg and Moscow have their clubs and courses, and the Mourino Club, belonging to the former, has its place near a small village some dozen miles from the capital. The golf is good for Russia, but one does not quickly forget the roughness of the road in reaching it. And down at the bottom of that side of the map there is golf at Constantinople too! The game is done on the *yok maidan* just outside the city, *yok* being Persian for "arrow," and *maidan* the word for "plain," the fact being that it was on this land that the sultans and their suites in days gone by were accustomed to practise archery, and there are still on the plain many stone pillars erected to the memory of great shots that were made. The English-speaking colony had some difficulty to gain permission to golf on this ground, and, having no exclusive rights in the matter, are harassed by many worries. It is used largely for drilling soldiers, and is described as being "a favourite resort for Jews on Saturdays, for Greeks on Sundays, and for Turks on Fridays." The golfer may need to delay his stroke while a long string of camels passes through the fairway, and again he may have difficulty in persuading a party of Turkish ladies, closely veiled, taking the sun on one of the putting greens, to retire therefrom for a little while. Yet the game is much enjoyed by the officials of foreign Governments in Constantinople, and the turf on the *yok maidan* is good.

In the rich remembrances of the game there is little that is mournful; but one sad moment comes when I[Pg 42] read a letter reminding me that golf was once played "farthest south," where man does not abide save briefly for exploration and adventure, where there is eternal ice and snow. Captain Robert Scott, the glorious British hero of the Southern Pole, whose friendship I enjoyed, was a golfer too. One of many letters of a personal kind I had from him, just before he set out on his last magnificent but fatal expedition, was addressed from the Littlestone Golf Club. He asked me to send to the ship a certain piece of golfing literature, believing that "members of the expedition would read it with interest and, I hope, with benefit to their handicaps!" He had taken some clubs and balls up there into the Antarctic on his previous expedition, when farthest south was reached. On one of the last days he spent in London I had some talk with him on different matters, and we joked about ways of playing Antarctic shots. We were in his office in Victoria Street then. "Good-bye!" he said in parting, "And you must come to meet me on my return!" And if none met him coming back, yet we know the game he played.

The fact that there is golf nearly everywhere on earth will make it appear to some minds, reasonably too, that here is a convenient diversion for those travellers who like this sort of thing, something with which they can fill up time when held up for a while in a distant country and being impatient or weary. True, golf is good for that; but the unsophisticated who imagine that this is the full relation between travel and the game, and that this is the function of the courses everywhere, suffer from a poor delusion, which is expensive.

It is a modern necessity to the traveller. In these days we are a people of wanderers; railways offer[Pg 43] cheap journeys, steamships carry us over seas at little cost, hotels are good and comfortable; and why should those who like and have the hours not be always roaming and seeing the open world? But travelling sometimes has its inconveniences and its tedious days. Some wanderers unconsciously exert themselves towards loneliness, and they do not love it when they have it. The joy of meeting with a friend when one is half a globe away from home! With all the travelling that is done in these days there has come a great increase of loneliness. Golf has been set to destroy it. There are still people who travel and do not golf, but they are fewer daily, and as each new travel-golfer is established he wonders how he lived and moved and was moderately well contented and satisfied before. His travelling was a plain occupation then; now it makes more emotion and thrill, and, positively, it is more educative. There was a time, when I was very young, when I did not golf as I travelled abroad, partly because there were few courses to play upon and no golfers to play with, for it is only in recent times that the game has been established in every country in the world; and as I look back upon those days it is hard to realise that they were in this present life. They should have belonged to some other existence, which in the course of time and nature was given up, a reincarnation having followed ages after.

The traveller who is golfless has often no friends at the places that he visits. Some men and women have good capacity for making them at each hotel they stay in; others have not. In any case these acquaintanceships are exceedingly thin; the people do not really know each other; oftentimes they say not what they think, and they have no common interest. This kind of friendship with all its making of artificial conversation is poor stuff at times. The golfless wanderer in his[Pg 44] travelling does one of two things; either he does hardly anything at all or he goes to see the sights; and one suspects that much of the peering through the gloom of dark cathedrals and the lounging in picture galleries is done merely for the killing of time, and for the formal recording of places that have been visited and sights that have been seen. Some travellers are happiest when they have done their business with the churches and the local castles and may leave by the next train—one day nearer home and still working well!

The case of the golfing traveller is very different. He has friends in every big town in every country, and all await his coming to make pleasure and happiness for him. He needs to scheme nothing in advance; they are prepared for him always. The automatic management of this real society of friends is most marvellously perfect. The wanderer, let us say, is advancing towards a new place—one that he knows nothing of. From the people about him now he may make inquiry as to which is the golf hotel at his destination, for often there is one to which golfers most resort, and, with his golf directory containing the names of all the golf clubs in the world, and with some particulars and the secretaries' addresses, away he goes complete and well prepared. His corny hands and his bag of clubs are his passport to every links. By the perfect system that we have, every man who is a golfer and a member of a golf club is *ipso facto* a travelling member of nearly every other golf club in the world, and is admitted to full playing and other privileges without delay on paying the trifling fees of temporary membership, sometimes with even less than that. And one golf club seems very much like another—just a branch of it; the atmosphere is the same, and the men are the same. The stranger reaches his new destination, in England or in India, in France or in America; he registers at his hotel; and as soon as[Pg 45] may be he seeks direction from the manager or the hall porter as to the whereabouts of the golf club. There he goes. At once, then, he is admitted to the local community of players, and they make much of him. They arrange games for him, surround him with the most hospitable companions, discover that he and they have many mutual friendships in different parts of the world, and linger upon other common ground in their memories of the third hole at one and the seventeenth at some other place. How the talk goes on! This golfer arrived among the unknown at ten in the morning, and at four in the afternoon he is tied to as many good friends as man could need. They invite him here and there; they take him to their homes; they make much of him. Stranger indeed! A thin voice of a petulant cynic may be heard again. "Yes," says he, "but in travelling one does not wish to spend all one's time in playing games and lounging about golf clubs!" True; and the golfing traveller, though he likes to visit courses in other countries, and finds it well to have an object always and something good with which to fill the daylight hours and keep his health in a well-balanced state, uses the game and its people to greater advantage than even that. The golf community of a place is always the most active and the most useful. There are the local dignitaries, the people of influence and consequence, men who know everything about the town, and can do



most things. They can open doors that are locked, and take you to the most secret places. And so the golfing traveller, the first desire for the best of games being satisfied, always finds that his new friends wish to help him. Perhaps the ambassador is here, and ambassadors are serviceable men. All wise people golf a little at the present time. They give their guest letters of introduction; they tell him how to go about. They do much more than that, for they[Pg 46] get out their cars and take him. Places which seem unfriendly to others are always friendly to the golfer. There is no particular community, no society, no association, no brotherhood in the world that is so real in its effectiveness, so thoroughly practical as this of golf. A quarter of a million British golfers know that this is true, and they know the reason why.

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From the consideration of this busy world of golf in general it is an easy move in thought to the one wee spot of it from which it has to a large extent developed, upon which the great scheme continually hangs, being the fourth of our seven wonders of golf—ancient St. Andrews. In a measure I developed this idea at the beginning of the consideration of golf as the world game; but now for a moment regard the capital of golf, not as the parliament place where the high statesmen do ponderously deliberate and with stern visage that befits their lofty authority most solemnly severally and jointly promulgate various laws and ordinances, but as the wonder city of the golfing world where one gathers emotions from a ghostly past, a city where golf is everything and nothing else is anything, where golf is life. This is the aspect of St. Andrews, and the only one, in which it is really great. We have much respect for our rulers. They are wise men, and we believe that they maintain the spirit of the game better than any other body of men could or would. They are well born and trained in golf, and the atmosphere of St. Andrews keeps them straight in the true golfing way. One who lived in an inland manufacturing town or spent his days in the office of a colliery would lose his golfing perspective early in middle age. But these excellents of Fifeshire play a[Pg 47] little, read a little, talk much and deliberate, and the social and intellectual atmosphere keeps them strong in their golfing sense always. The government of St. Andrews is really one to respect and have faith in, but it is not the existing wonder of St. Andrews. When you visit the place, such of these rulers as live there do not impress you for anything save their good golf, their excellent and pleasant manners, their keen wit, their fine sense in matters of intellect, their tolerable aestheticism, their shrewd judgment in political affairs, their sound advice on financial questions, their fine epicurean taste, their kingly cellars, their magnificent hospitality, and their charming women. In nothing else that I can think of do they excel, and as minor deities, or as a college of cardinals with a captain for pope, endowed with powers transmitted from a golfers' heaven, they are failures. They are merely human, very good, and excellently conservative.

No sort of people make St. Andrews. Only in two circumstances are the living humans of the place specially interesting. One is on the occasion of the autumn meeting of the Royal and Ancient Club, when the cannon on the hill is fired, when the new captain plays himself in with ceremony, and when all the ancient rites are properly observed until far on in the night. The other is in the attitude of the people generally towards this game as a thing of life, their seeming feeling that it is nearly the beginning and end of all things in this world. This may not be a proper view, and it is for something of the kind, but yet long distant from it, that the golfers of the south are chided and ridiculed for their enthusiasm. That, again, is why the real golfer, heart and soul for the game, who, if he would confess it, does let it take a larger part of his life sometimes than is very good for him (but who knows what this fellow would be doing if not golfing?), feels happy when at[Pg 48] St. Andrews, feels that at last he has come to his real home. For here the people look upon him just as merely right and normal because he is a golfer and nothing but a golfer—and a man with a little money to spare. His chief peculiarity is not that he stammers or is deaf or is a total abstainer, that he is a peer of the realm or mayor of his town or a professor of Greek, but that he addresses his ball with the heel of his club or pulls a little always. The place is attuned to his feeling of life; it is in sympathy with him. It is either a fine day for the game—as most days are—or it is no day at all. If we lose our match it does not matter what the papers say of politics or Germany; if we win it, the papers matter less. The caddies know that you are a golfer and what is your handicap; and if you are the real thing that is enough for them. Be not a golfer at heart or a namby-pamby person hanging to the game, and their contempt is rarely hidden. In the hotels they know what golf means to people; the chambermaid on calling you in the morning may tell you the direction the wind is blowing, knowing that it matters more than any hot water. The men in the club-makers' shops are sorely concerned in your domestic difficulties about the length of the shaft of your driver and your quarrel with an iron. They know what it is; they are kindly, worldly-wise doctors, who are the constant recipients of the confidences of poor sufferers. They will try to put you right. All the advertisements on the walls are of golf; the notices in the shop windows are of golf matches and competitions. The streets are called after golf, the taverns have golf names. Yes! golf is in all the air and all the earth and all the people of this ancient city with its far-seen spires.

But yet even these things do not give to St. Andrews its ineffable charm; if they are all that the wanderer[Pg 49] notices he is not the real man of the game after all, nor is the splendid quality of the holes on the old course and on the new enough either, great as is that quality. The wanderer missed St. Andrews if these things were all that were discovered. He should understand that here we feel that the Swilcan Burn is greater than the Dardanelles; Asia is a trifle when we survey the vast extent of the fifth putting green, and little enough do we worry of hell when with a fine long shot with the brassey we can carry "the devil's kitchen" on the way to the fourteenth green. Here the game is in the air; we breathe it, feel it. And the reason why is because the spirits are in the air, the spirits of the ancients who at St. Andrews laid the foundations of this game, served for its traditions, set it up and shaped it to the good service of men, and gave their stamp to every inch of this great old course. Do not misunderstand. These men, I do believe, were often very ordinary simple human beings; they may have been no better than we are. There is a possibility that they were worse. They may not have been worthy to be canonised as they have been; but let us not inquire upon these matters, for we should not peer too closely at the gods. What matters is that in the first place undoubtedly they were in at the game before we were, in at it the first of all, were evidently uncommonly shrewd people, and for their discovery of golf and their presentation of it to us their perpetual dignity was well won. It matters also that we have many volumes of good stories about them, and none that is in any serious sense against them. On legend and anecdote they win well. And, third, whatever they were, we believe them to have been these great men, we set them up in our imagination as such, we recreate them to our fancies and desires, and they seem somehow to respond.[Pg 50]

So we imagine, believe, and are well satisfied, and therefore the spirits of golf take advantage and seem always to hover in the air of the old grey city, brooding upon the links, contented that things are moving as well as they are, and that what they began prospers so finely, though they wail a little, one would imagine, about what the rubber-cored ball has done, and the wraith of old Allan Robertson turns round to the ghost of the elder Morris, murmuring, "D'ye mind, Tammas, the awfu' trouble that we bodies had wi' ane anither when the gutty ba' kem hither to St. Andrews, and I caught ye, ma servin' man, ye ken, playin' gowff, as ye wad say, wi' Campbell of Saddell and wi' the gutty, and me a maker o' the featheries tae!"

"Aye, I ken weel eno'," croons the shade of Old Tom, "and I'm telling ye, Allan, man, that I was fower up on Mr. Campbell at the eleventh hole, and I was playin' ma very best, and wi' ma second shot at the fourteenth, eh mon alive —"

"Na, na, Tammas, nane o' yer rantin' about the shots as ye played at St. Andrews, when ye spent the best pairt o' yer time ower theer at Prestwick, and ye never could mak' up a scoor from a' yer ither scoors as wad come to 56 like mine. Ye ken that, Tom! And dinna forget, ma laddie, as I was goin' to tell ye, that when I saw ye wi' that awfu' new ba' as wad ruin every bit body o' us I tell't ye straight, ma man, as ye must go, and never a bit o' wark did ye do in ma shop again."

And then Tom, good-natured old ghost as he is, and loving his Allan still, just answers, "Puir Allan, ye always were a cunnin' body o' a man, and a guid man tae, and fun about ye a' the time!"

And all this about ghosts and the times they have in the air over St. Andrews old links may look like nonsense, but those who do not believe it, or do not[Pg 51] feel that they believe it by mental adoption, have not been to St. Andrews properly, and do not understand her.

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The most utterly non-golfing and sceptical person may be convinced in another way, by matters not of ghosts and fancies but of laws and prisons, that St. Andrews is all golf and is not as other places are. There are laws of the town approved by Act of Parliament, by which it is made illegal to practise putting on the eighteenth green or to play on the course with iron clubs only, the penalty for offences in these matters being a fine or imprisonment. Where else is there a place where a golfer may get fourteen days for depending for all his long shots on his driving iron or his cleek? Clearly, the law is made for the good of the precious turf and the teeing grounds of the old course, and that it is not law made to be looked and laughed at is proved by the fact that a Prime Minister himself was once warned for infringing it. One time when at St. Andrews I made an examination of the complete bye-laws in which these prohibitions are included. They are embraced in the St. Andrews Links Act, which was passed in 1894, and in the Burgh Police Act of Scotland, which was made law two years earlier. The regulations for the use of the old and new golf courses make up these bye-laws, and they are twenty-one in number. Following them are four "general regulations for the whole links as defined by Schedule I. of the Links Act," and at the finish there is a clause about penalties, wherein it is said that "any person who shall contravene any of the foregoing bye-laws shall be liable, on conviction, in a penalty not exceeding one pound for each

offence, and, failing payment, to imprisonment for any period not exceeding[Pg 52] fourteen days." There it is, the law, and it is that last clause with its sting that gives the point to the whole story.

Now let us look at these bye-laws and see how careful we must be when we go to the great city of golf, and for what we may be fined a pound or lodged in a Fifeshire gaol for a full fortnight, during which our game might go to rack and ruin.

In the first place it is set down that "no person shall play cricket, football, or any game other than golf upon the golf courses." Surely nobody who ever went to St. Andrews would wish to play any other game, but here we have it plainly set forth that the golf of St. Andrews will bear no rivals, and it must be remembered that the great putting green, on which the fifth and thirteenth holes are made, is big enough for several cricket pitches, and also that the large flat space along which a fairway for the first and eighteenth is situated might be made into various football grounds. But what sacrilege! It is well that men may be sent to prison if they ever committed it. Then you may be punished by law if you do not begin your match at the first teeing ground, but no doubt some thousands of people in their time have risked chastisement for this offence. "No player shall, in teeing his ball, raise the turf of the teeing ground." There is sand there for him who wants it, and he must not make his tee in the prehistoric way. After this there are some points of etiquette which are made matters of law. Elsewhere, if we disregard the etiquette of the game as set forth at the end of the rules, we are merely told about it by other people and regarded as very badly-mannered golfers, but at St. Andrews the sovereign or fourteen days needs to be considered. Thus "no player shall play from the tee until the party in front have played their second strokes and are out[Pg 53] of range, nor play to the putting green till the party in front have holed out and moved away." And again, "players looking for a lost ball must allow any other match coming up to pass them," and "every caddie, and every player unaccompanied by a caddie, shall replace any turf that may be accidentally removed by the player's club, and shall press it firmly with the foot." Then we may be fined or sent to prison if, when practising, we drive a ball off a putting green, that is, within twenty yards of a hole, and the eighth clause is that which is known to all men—"To prevent destruction of the turf of the golf courses, play or practice with iron clubs alone is prohibited." Also, "no practice is allowed over the first and eighteenth holes of the Old Course, nor shall any practice be allowed over any part of the golf courses so as to obstruct or delay players."

Upon all this, it is enacted that when playing with three or more balls we must allow those who are only playing two, as in an ordinary single match, to pass us on being requested to do so, that we must let a match through if we do not play the whole round but cut in somewhere, that we must not pierce the ground with any golf club support nor with the flags from the holes, nor must we drive towards any person without calling out "Fore!" and waiting until he gets out of range. No man when at St. Andrews is allowed "to play the short game at the regular golf holes, except when engaged in a regular game of golf," and, as said, "no practising is allowed on the eighteenth putting green." There are five other bye-laws, mostly long, but the only other one which is specially interesting is that which is designed to preserve the integrity of the Swilcan Burn, which has played its part so thoroughly and drastically at times of great competitions. No other golf stream is[Pg 54] protected by an Act of Parliament in the way that this one is, and its high dignity is unimpeachable. We are warned, under the usual penalty of a fine or imprisonment, that "no one shall wade in the Swilcan Burn, so far as it flows through the Old Course, nor shall any one, except players or caddies in search of their ball, do anything to cause its waters to become discoloured or muddy." There are surely times when we feel that we could not do anything to make the Swilcan Burn appear uglier than it does at those times.

Why a distinction should be made between the "bye-laws" and the "general regulations," four in number, is not quite clear, but it would appear that the penalties of fine and imprisonment may be inflicted if the latter are disobeyed as well as the former. If that is so, we begin to wonder when we see the warning that "no one shall use profane language upon the links to the annoyance of the lieges." Let us then hope, for the sake of the law and our respect for it, that the lieges are not habitually in the neighbourhood of the putting green when putts are being missed that should not be. But it is good to see that there is a kind of general warning that "no one shall annoy or interfere with any one exercising a legitimate use of the links," which means, of course, playing golf. We golfers, according to these bye-laws and the Act of Parliament which supports them, may be sent to prison for doing so many things that it is excellent to know the common people may be cast there also if they meddle with us when we play the game in our own good way, and manage by thought and attention to avoid infringement of the many cautions which the fathers of St. Andrews have prescribed for our welfare and that of their dear old course. The Sheriff of Fife has set it down that he "allows and confirms" these bye-laws, the Secretary of Scotland has officially approved of[Pg 55] them, and the staff employed by the Green Committee are authorised to see that they are obeyed, especially those about replacing turf, playing with irons only, and practising at the first and eighteenth holes. Contemplating these enactments, we conclude that St. Andrews is the best and proper place for the upbringing of the golfer's son.

## CHAPTER III

### THE TRAGEDIES OF THE SHORT PUTT, AND A CONTRAST BETWEEN CHILDREN AND CHAMPIONS, WITH THE VARIED COUNSEL OF THE WISEST MEN.

The case of an earth so well explored by golfing travellers having been considered as the third of the wonders of the sphere, and the peculiarity of St. Andrews as the fourth, there is a clear suggestion as to which is the next or fifth wonder of the series. Inevitably one recalls the tearful situation of the mighty hunter in a story which is passed in company as fact. He declared he had encountered all the manifold perils of the jungle, had tracked the huge elephant to its retreat, and had stood eye to eye with the man-eating tiger. It is believed that he had done all these things. Then he added, "And never once have I trembled until I came to a short putt." For me one of the most remarkable things I have seen in golf was at an Open Championship meeting at St. Andrews when, watching and musing by the side of the eighteenth green, I saw four of the greatest players of this or any other time come up to it in the competition one by one and have putts of less than eighteen inches at that hole. Three of the four missed! In the old days, at all events, when the greens were not quite as they are now, but became very glassy and slippery with much wind and constant play upon them, I believe there were more short putts missed on the old course at St.[Pg 57] Andrews than on any other two courses in the world, and the task of holing the little stupids on that home green was a most tormenting ordeal.

So, with the broken-hearted explorer, and the tragedy of St. Andrews, there is pointed to us for the next wonder of the game the missing of the short putt. And I do believe, and so must others, that the missing of such a short putt as it seems humanly impossible for any man, having the control of his limbs and being *compos mentis*, to miss is one of the most remarkable features of any game, and one that would be completely and absolutely inexplicable did it not in itself offer a most splendid illustration of the full effect of strain of mind on physical action, of the pressure of great responsibility on an over-anxious man. It embraces nearly the whole psychology of golf. The short putt largely explains the game, and it is testimony to the soundness of this view, and the rightful selection of this as a permanent wonder, that the general public would never believe the truth as we know it, that it is possible for the greatest players with what is to them, for the time being, almost as much as their lives depending on it, to miss putts so little that no walking baby properly fed would miss. The general public, with its vast stores of common sense, would not believe the fact; it would ridicule it and treat the whole suggestion with contempt, and it might in a sense be right; but then the general public has not been fighting its way round a golf course against another and very truculent general public, driving, playing seconds and thirds, getting bunkered and recovering, and encountering all manner of difficulties and dangers, and then had its fate for the day depending on a short putt at the eighteenth green! By psychology of the game, as just mentioned, we mean, of course, the way in which the mind and the emotions act and react upon the physical system and its capacity,[Pg 58] how doubts and fears are engendered, and things from not seeming what they are become really different, so far as the attitude of the player to them is concerned. Thus, as has been well said, a putt of ten inches on the first green is, as one might feel, a putt of thirty inches—though still in fact of the same length—when that green is not the first but the thirty-seventh, and that on which a long-drawn-out match is being finished.

One summer's day, on a course in France, a little party of us were discussing the slow and sure methods of certain Americans then in Europe—if, really, they were quite so sure as they were slow. Indeed they hustled not. The point was put forward by one of us that there is a moment in waiting when inspiration and confidence come together, or at least come then as well as ever they can or will, and that if the hesitation is prolonged beyond that moment, the result is inevitably loss of faith, increasing doubt and timidity, and a distorted view of the situation arising from fear of fate. Half the difficulties of golf are due to the fact that the player has an abundance of time to think about what he is engaged to do and how it should be done. In that time hopes and fears and many emotions race through his mind, and tasks which were originally simple become every moment harder. In no other game has the player such ample leisure in which to think, to be careful, to be exact, and to decide upon the proper action, and thus responsibility is heaped upon him for what he does as it is in no other sport or recreation. He is oppressed with a mighty burden. That which he does he is entirely responsible for, and it can never be

undone. It follows that this game has an extensive and peculiar psychology such as is possessed by no other. I shall proceed to tell a little story, dramatic in its circumstances, abounding in significance. It embraces the meanings and mysteries of golf.[Pg 59]

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The strange case of Sir Archibald Strand is one that caused much excited attention among the members of the golf community in general some months ago, and it is still discussed in the club-houses. Sir Archibald Strand, Bart., is a fair example of the thorough, enthusiastic, middle-aged player, who treats golf as something rather more than a game, which is as it should be. He is one of tolerably equable temperament, a good sportsman, and a man of strong character and physique, who did a long term of military service in India. Nowadays he spends an appreciable portion of his time in golfing, and a fair part of the remainder in contemplating the enduring mysteries and problems of the links. The game worries him exceedingly, occasionally it leads him to unhappiness, but, on the whole, he feels he likes it. He is a member of several London clubs, including Sunningdale, Walton Heath, Mid-Surrey, Coombe Hill, and Woking, and of his seaside clubs those he most frequents are the Royal St. George's at Sandwich, and Rye. His handicap is 5, and generally he is what we consider and call a good reliable 5.

He and his opponent, to whom, as a matter of discretion and confidence, we must refer as Mr. A., had just ended their match at Mid-Surrey one pleasant day, and Sir Archibald was trying his last putt over again as golfers often do. It was a putt of two feet. He had missed it before; but now, of course, he rolled the ball in every time. A question arose about circumstances altering cases, as they so commonly do in golf, and of responsibility weighing heavily on the mind that hesitates; and Sir Archibald declared that nobody in good health could be such a fool as to miss a two-foot putt like that, if he really examined the line[Pg 60] thoroughly, and took the proper pains. Just then the open champion of the period was passing by the green, and they called him up and asked his views upon the missing of two-foot putts. Taylor denied that a man was a fool for missing them. He mentioned the psychology of the business, and very forcibly argued that a two-foot putt was a very difficult thing, that the more important it was the more difficult it became, and that the longer one thought about it the more impossible did it seem to hole it. "Ah!" said he, with the solemn countenance he assumes when discussing the terrors of this game, and the deep emphasis he makes when he admits the difficulties it creates for him, "Ah!" he murmured, "if I had never missed any putts of one foot, let alone the putts of two! I tell you, sir, the two-foot putt, when it has to be done—mind you when it has got to be done—is one of the most difficult things in the world to do, and never mind the fact that your babies can do it all the time! Take that from me, sir!" This was a touch of the real Taylor, the true philosopher, one who knows the game.

Mr. A., who is sometimes aggressive in manner, brought the matter in discussion to a pretty point at once. "Look here, Strand," said he, "I will tell you what I will do. I will place this ball here, so, exactly two feet from the hole, and I will give you a fortnight, but not less than a fortnight, to hole that putt. You are not to practise it here at this hole on this green in the meantime; but you may place the ball in position if you like, and look at it. And a fortnight to-day, at ten o'clock in the morning, you must make the putt, and I will bet you fourteen guineas, being a guinea a day for waiting, that you do not hole it. We will have the position of the hole properly marked, so that a fortnight hence it shall be in the same place." [Pg 61]

The champion said he would tell Lees, the greenkeeper, and that should be done. Strand, with a laugh, accepted the wager, and the matter was settled.

The events that followed were curious. In the club-house there was then little disposition to attend to the accounts of the proceedings that were furnished by both parties. The men who had finished rounds were too much occupied with their own troubles or joys.

At his club in town that evening, Sir Archibald, over dinner, related the circumstances of the wager to a few friends, with an appearance of considerable satisfaction with himself, and seemed a little surprised that the other members of the party did not at once approve of his proceeding as sound and businesslike.

"Of course, you know, Strand, my good man," said Mr. Ezekiel Martin, a successful stockbroker, "these putts are missed sometimes, and I don't suppose it makes it any easier for you by waiting a fortnight. It's like carrying over in the House till one is a very tired bull."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Sir Archibald, "I could go out now and hole that putt nineteen times out of twenty in the dark!"

"I believe you could," answered Martin, "but doing it in the dark, when you cannot see the hole and realise all the imaginary difficulties, is very different from doing it in broad daylight; and putting now, on the spur of the moment, as it were, is very different from putting when you have a whole fortnight to think about what you are going to do."

"I don't see it," replied Sir Archibald, yet he began to feel a little uneasy. On returning home that night, instead of going to bed at once he went into his study, laid a tumbler on its side on the carpet, and putted from a measured two feet for about half an hour. He[Pg 62] holed most of them, and tumbled into bed feeling that Martin had been "pulling his leg," as people say. In the morning he engaged a gardener to smooth down a piece of his lawn, planting in a little putting-green turf, and he had a hole made in it, and a circle with two feet radius drawn round the hole, so that he could putt from every point. When this work was done, he spent an hour in practising there, and succeeded well. He only missed about one in ten. He tried seven different putters, with approximately equal results. In the afternoon he went down to Mid-Surrey, played a match, and lost it by missing a short putt at the home hole. After tea, he went out on to the eighteenth green, found the spot where the hole was the day before, examined it carefully, and saw that there were slight differences in the texture of the grass round about, and that there was a little depression to the left side. He had not noticed this before. However, said he to himself, it would be easy to make allowances for these things, but he began now to doubt whether thirteen days ahead he would use his wry-necked putting cleek or bolt the putt with an aluminium putter. Where there are troubles of that kind it is often better to make short work of the putt by the bolting way, and have an end of it. At home that evening he did more putting practice on the carpet, and did not hole them quite so well. Lady Strand, who understands her husband thoroughly, and is the sweetest, gentlest sympathiser, coaxed him to telling her the trouble, for she saw that one existed. With perfect wisdom she suggested that he should wipe the fourteen guineas from the current account as already lost, and face the task as one who had all to gain and nothing to lose. Of course, her husband said, it was not the money, but the frightful jackass he would look if he missed the putt.[Pg 63]

He went to his club in town the next day instead of going to golf, and took with him a book containing a chapter on putting, by Willie Park. He stretched himself out on a Chesterfield in a corner of the library, and gazed at two spots on the carpet which he had measured as being two feet from each other. Eventually, he decided that that was not good for him, since equal distances in furnished rooms, as is well known, look longer than they look outside. He lunched with a few friends, and brought up the subject again.

"Give him the money and have done with it, Strand. You are sure to lose!" said the brutish Martin.

"I wish I had not to wait for a fortnight," murmured Strand.

"Ah! He knew! The other man knew!" rejoined Martin. "He knows the game of golf! What I cannot understand is why he did not give you a year and make it 365 guineas. You would have sold out in six weeks at £200!"

Sir Archibald wrote a letter to Mr. A. that evening, intimating that he would probably have to leave town the week after the next. He hinted that it might be convenient if they got their wager out of the way beforehand, and if he putted a week from then. Mr. A. replied that he was sorry it would not be convenient for him to attend then, and that the signed terms of the contract had better be abided by.

Sir Archibald bought two new putters on the following day, and in the afternoon he had Taylor out for an hour, and they went practising on the putting lawn just outside the garden gate. Sir Archibald was putting very well then; but he insisted that it would be a good thing to change the ball he was using, which was rather lively. After he had done with Taylor, he went to look at the place on the eighteenth green where he would have to putt, and it seemed that the coarse grass[Pg 64] had fattened up considerably with the rain that had fallen, and that the sand below it was distinctly gritty. It began to seem that he would have to run the ball in at the right side of the hole. He asked Lees some questions about the grasses on that green, and was sorry he could not take a little Mid-Surrey turf home with him. He was feeling a little tired when he reached his home that night, and as it was Thursday he suggested to Lady Strand that they should go to Folkestone for the week-end, and not bother at all about golf, which they did accordingly. He found it delightful to linger on the leas and not be worried with the game.

This kind of thing continued and became worse and worse again during the days that followed. There was practice, thought, and purchase continually, and unfortunately the proportion of missed putts at two feet, both on the carpet, on the practice lawn, and on the greens at Mid-Surrey, Coombe Hill, and Woking, began to increase. At putts of three feet, four, and five, Sir Archibald was marvellous, and, of course, he never missed the very little ones; but the two-foot putts bothered him all the time. He attributed it to his liver; and he was certainly looking worn. Matters were not improved by such inconsiderate remarks as were made by Martin, Evans, and

others, whenever he had a two-feet putt to do, such as "Now, Strand, that's just your distance!" It was only a joke; but in the circumstances it was not perhaps in good taste.

On the evening of the twelfth day Strand, after deliberation, wrote a letter to A. in which he said he feared he would not be able to go down to the course at the appointed time, and intimated that, according to the terms of the wager, he would hand over the fourteen guineas to him when next they met. Before posting this letter he went and did a little practice in the dusk on the lawn outside the house. He seemed to [Pg 65] get them down with some confidence on this occasion, and Lady S., watching him, called out cheerily, "Silly boy! as if you could really miss! Now what shall I buy with the fourteen guineas?"

So Strand tore up the letter and went to bed for rest.

On the night before the appointed day he slept badly. He was putting in his mind until three o'clock in the morning. Then he rose, went in his pyjamas into the study, made a line on the top of his aluminium putter indicating the striking point, and went back to bed, but did not sleep. For some time he tried an imaginary humming of the "Jewel Song" from *Faust*, and repeated a few lines from Scott's "Lady of the Lake"—old dodges of his for assisting distraction and sleep—but they did not serve, nor did a fixed vision of millions of balls falling in an endless stream from the mouth of a pump and disappearing instantly through a golf hole in the ground.

At five-thirty he rose again and took his bath. He hesitated as to what golfing suit he should wear. Finally, for the sake of complete ease, and that there should be nothing to attract his eye from the ball, he put on some dark-blue flannels.

He looked at his breakfast, pecked at a sole, and at nine-fifteen, feeling distinctly unwell, he took a taxi for the course. He had one great consolation upholding him. At five minutes past ten it would all be over. He felt that he knew how glad a condemned criminal must be that at five minutes past eight on a certain morning—or a minute or two earlier with a little luck—a black flag would be hoisted on the prison pole.

At seven minutes to ten he drank a large brandy and soda and went out to the eighteenth green. Mr. A. and a few others were there to see the business properly carried out. Taylor placed the ball exactly two feet [Pg 66] from the hole, which was cut in the proper place. He had his watch in his hand.

Sir Archibald bent down and examined the putt with great care. He essayed to pick up what seemed to be a "loose impediment" on his line, but saw that it was not loose. The putt seemed very difficult now, and he wished he had brought his plain putting cleek out with him, but it was too late.

At ten o'clock exactly, Taylor said, "Now, Sir Archibald, will you kindly putt?"

Sir Archibald Strand looked like a man who had been hunted down. He made one swift glance around him, but saw no escape, so he pulled himself together, smiled a little sadly, and said to himself, "Don't be a fool, Archie!" Then he faced the putter to the ball; the club was trembling slightly. He swung it back much too far, checked it in the return swing, and came on to the ball in a nervous, stupid sort of way, doing little more than touch it. The ball took a line to the right of the hole, and did not run more than fourteen inches.

You may have thought that Sir Archibald used unfortunate words and was dismayed. He did not. A look of established happiness and placid contentment spread upon his countenance, as a streak of sunlight might flash across a plain. "Ha!" he sighed in relief. He took from his pocket a cheque for fourteen guineas already made out, and handed it to Mr. A., and then joyfully exclaimed: "Thank heaven, it is finished! Now, my friends, we will honour this unusual occasion in a suitable manner at your convenience, and this afternoon I leave for Sandwich for a week of golf. And no letters are being forwarded."

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Let us now enter consideration of this matter in a proper frame of mind, seriously and not looking [Pg 67] contemptuously upon the problem of holing even the very shortest of putts as no problem at all after the affected manner of the inexperienced and uninformed general public. Let us approach it cautiously and in an analytical spirit. We should take the evidence of expert witnesses upon happenings in their careers, in our endeavour to discover the real truth. We have already remarked upon the case of the hunter who shot tigers and cringed at putts, and of the great champions who all missed them on the eighteenth green at St. Andrews, when they were playing for nothing less than the championship. We have also contemplated the circumstances of the distressed baronet who was given a fortnight in which to hole a two-feet putt, suffered intolerable agonies during the

period, and was only restored to happiness when he had failed at the stroke. Now let us pay regard to the experience of a little child only six years old, who was completely successful at many putts in succession, at distances of from one to six feet, all the most perilous situations. This remarkable demonstration was witnessed by the proud parents, by a great professional, and by myself.

The child is a boy, and not, as has been stated, a winsome little girl. There is, if I may say it without offence, nothing remarkable about his parents. They are excellent kindly-mannered people, of tolerable middle-class education, simple in their manner of life, and of no pronounced tastes in any direction. The father is in a large timber business in the Midlands, and has probably an income of about six hundred pounds a year. His handicap is 14. He is not a very keen golfer, and seems to spend a fair amount of his time in his garden. A total abstainer, he smokes little, and has no strong tastes in art and literature; but he once told me that in addition to much Scott and a sufficiency of Dickens he had read one of my books on golf. That [Pg 68] is the father. As to the mother, she is just one who might be called in the north a nice little body. She is a thoroughly good housewife, domesticated, affectionate, and if she does not play golf she sympathises with it. These are people who are tolerably satisfied with their state. They live in a pleasant house, employ two maidservants, and have no motor-car. Here, surely, is nothing to suggest the creation of genius. Yet they are the parents of this remarkable child who did, with no hesitation, with confidence, certainty, and frequency, what the mighty hunter, the champions, the bold but misguided baronet, and you and I have failed to accomplish.

There is a man of wit and wisdom, Andrew Kirkaldy, who, when you inquire of him what is the most difficult thing in golf, responds with no hesitation that it is to hole "a wee bit divvle of a putt that long!" and so saying he will hold his hands four feet apart. Occasionally he may vary the phraseology, not to its advantage, but the meaning and effect remain the same. Andrew is solid on four feet. But authorities differ a little in this matter of measurement. Some will reduce the distance to thirty inches; others have it that the yard putt is the most trying; I have heard eighteen inches put forward. But it all amounts to much the same thing, that what looks ridiculously easy is very, very difficult. Now this tender little child, who knew nothing of the fears and dangers of this awful game, placed the ball at a distance of two feet from the hole on a curly and slippery green, and with a sublime aplomb hit it straight to the middle of the hole—the first putt of his life and a good one. Then he putted from a yard and holed it again, then from Kirkaldy's distance and played the stroke just as surely and successfully, and then repeated them many times, never faltering, never failing. We who watched [Pg 69] were a trifle sad, and perhaps ashamed. We knew that with all our thought and skill and golfing learning, all our strength and manhood, we could not do the same when at our games, and that, the more we needed to do it by the importance of the golf that was being played, the more difficult it was. Our selfish consolation was that in time the little child would grow up and then he would not be able to hole those putts, for then he would know that it was a difficult thing to do, and would be embarrassed and defeated accordingly. For it is the golfer's consciousness of imaginary difficulties that makes him such a strange coward when this putting business is being done. He knows that really the putting is easy, but he knows also that he must not miss, that an inch lost here is as much of a loss as two hundred yards in the driving—and he fears his fate. It is consciousness of the stupidity of missing, nerves, fears, imagination, that make this missing of short putts by the cleverest players, champions as much as any others, the most remarkable thing that happens constantly in any game. There is nothing like it. If it were not so easy, if there were good excuse for failure, those putts would not be missed so frequently. In putting, said Sir Walter Simpson, there is much to think about and much more not to be thought of. "When a putter," he reflected, "is waiting his turn to hole out a putt of one or two feet in length, on which the match hangs at the last hole, it is of vital importance that he think of nothing. At this supreme moment he ought studiously to fill his mind with vacancy. He must not even allow himself the consolations of religion. He must not prepare himself to accept the gloomy face of his partner and the derisive delight of his adversaries with Christian resignation should he miss. He must not think that it is a putt he would not dream of missing at the beginning of the [Pg 70] match, or, worse still, that he missed one like it in the middle. He ought to wait, calm and stupid, till it is his turn to play, wave back the inevitable boy who is sure to be standing behind his arm, and putt as I have told him how—neither with undue haste nor with exaggerated care. When the ball is down, and the putter handed to the caddy, it is not well to say, 'I couldn't have missed it.' Silence is best. The pallid cheek and trembling lip belie such braggadocio."

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The truth is that the man who golfs will unceasingly think of the things he should not think of, and that is what makes this easy putting so difficult, and it explains why the innocent child, unthinking, finds the business as simple and pleasant as swinging under the boughs of a tree on a sunny day in June. While there is one quite easy way of doing nearly every putt, there are perhaps a dozen more or less difficult ways of missing it, and it is these that are uppermost in the golfer's mind when the time of his trial comes, and so once more is vice triumphant while angels are depressed. There is the hole, a pit that is deep and wide, four and a quarter inches in diameter,



and there is the little ball, only an inch and a half through the middle, and the intervening space between the two is smooth and even. It would seem to be the easiest thing in theory and practice to knock the ball into the large hole; but how very small does the hole then appear to be and how much too big for it is the ball! But the golfer knows that he should hole that putt, and that if he fails he will never, never have the chance again. Should he putt and miss the act is irrevocable; the stroke and the hole, or the half of it, are lost, and nothing that can happen[Pg 71] afterwards can remove that loss. Should he at the beginning of the play to a hole make a faulty drive, or should his approach play be very inaccurate, he knows that he may atone for these mistakes by special cleverness displayed in subsequent strokes, and with the buoyant hope that constantly characterises him he thinks he will. But the hope seems often to desert him at the end; confidence lapses. The short putt is the very last stroke in the play to that hole, and if it is missed there is no further opportunity for recovery. In this way it does seem sometimes that there is a little of the awful, the eternal, the infinite about that putt. The player is stricken with fear and awe. He knows it is an easy thing to do in the one proper way of doing it, but raging through his mind are hideous pictures of a dozen ways of missing. Once upon a time I put the question to a number of the greatest players of the age as to what were their thoughts, if any, when they came to making one of these little putts on which championships or other great affairs almost entirely depended, and almost invariably their answer was that at the last supreme moment a thought came into their minds and was expressed to themselves in these words: "What a fool I shall look if I miss this putt!" Those words exactly did Willie Park, the younger, say quietly to himself just as he was about to make the last short putt of a round at Musselburgh, which would or would not give him a tie for the championship with Andrew Kirkaldy. He did not say that if he missed the putt he would lose the championship. He said he would look a fool.

The other day in a quiet corner of London, away from the game but, as it happened, not from the thought of it, I had Harry Vardon with me engaged in some serious talk in a broad and general way upon golfing men and things. Ten years ago, when we[Pg 72] were doing some kind of collaboration in the production of a new book, he said to me very impressively and as one who wonders exceedingly, "It is a funny game; let us impress that upon them all, it is a very funny game," and now, having played perhaps five thousand more rounds and won another Open Championship, he went forward to the admission, "It is an awful game." He meant it, and one reason why we like our Harry Vardon is because he too has always been awe-stricken by this so-called game, and because there is no other man in golf who sympathises better with the trials and tortures of the moderate player. On this morning of spring he was telling me of another new and great discovery he had made in putting methods, and in giving to me an account of his pains, his sufferings in missing all the short putts he had failed at in recent times—how dearly have they cost him!—he said it was the two-foot putt that frightened him most of all, and declared solemnly and seriously that he would rather have a three-yarder than such a putt, and that he would hole the former oftener than the latter. He said the two-foot putts frighten him, that as soon as he settles himself down to the business of putting in such a case the hole seems to become less and less. "I am overcome," says he, "with the idea that in a moment it will be gone altogether. Then I am in a state of panic, and I snatch at my putter and hit the ball quickly so that with a little luck it may reach the hole before it goes away altogether and there is nothing to putt at. When I have missed I see that the hole is there, and as big as ever or bigger!" Vardon once tried putting left-handed, a doctor having advised him to do so, and he found that the idea worked splendidly, but he did not like the look of it. He believes after all his sorrows that one of the greatest and best secrets of good putting is to keep more absolutely still than[Pg 73] do most golfers, who seem to think it matters less in putting when it matters so much more.

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Now the golfer in his wisdom, ingenuity, and resource has tried every way he can think of to solve this problem of nerves and doubts by mechanical and other means. Those who would be successful in competitions have retired to bed at nine o'clock in the evening for a month, and some of them have sipped from bottles of tonics hoping that physic would serve to give them strong nerve, steady hands and courage, but such methods have not availed. For no part of this or any other game have so many different kinds of instruments been invented, though the little child could do the putts with the head of a walking-stick or a common poker. Scarcely a week goes by in the season but some new kind of putter is introduced to the expectant multitude of harassed players, and now and then a thrill runs through the world as they receive a clear assurance that at last some special device has been discovered which will make their putting ever afterwards easy and certain. There is a thrill as if a secret of long life had been found. But the chill of disappointment follows quickly. Golfers have now tried all things known, and more short putts are missed than ever. Hundreds of different kinds of putters have been invented. They have been made with very thin blades, and with thick slabs of metal or other substance instead of mere blades. They have been made like spades, like knives, like hammers, and like croquet mallets. They have even been made like putters. They have been made of wood, iron, aluminium, brass, gun-metal, silver, bone, and glass. Here in my room I have the sad gift of the creator of a forlorn[Pg 74] and foolish hope. It is a so-called putter made in the

shape of a roller on ball bearings which is meant to be wheeled along the green up to the ball. Like some others it was illegal according to the rules. To such extravagances of fancy the desperate golfers have been led in their desire to succeed in this putting that the authorities have had to step in for the defence of the dignity of the game to declare a limit to the scope of invention in this matter. And yet I once knew a man who for a long period did some of the best putting that you would ever fear to play against with a little block of wood that had once served to keep the door of his study ajar, to which had been attached a stick that was made from a broom handle. This improvised putter was a freak of his fancy at a time when he thought there might be some virtue in a return to prime simplicity. Then Mr. James Robb, who has won the Amateur Championship once and been in the final on two other occasions, has putted all his life with a cleek that his sister won in a penny raffle when he was a boy and gave to him. Likewise Mr. John Laidlay has also putted uninterruptedly since he was a boy with a cleek that is now so thin with much cleaning that his friends tell him he may soon be able to shave himself with it. But these are the grand exceptions after all. Such fine settlement and constancy are unknown to the average player. It was but the other day that I learned that a friend of mine, one most distinguished in the game and of the very highest skill, had used fifteen different putters on the day of an important competition—three in the morning's play, nine others in noonday practice, and three quite fresh ones in the afternoon game. The same good man carried a choice assortment of his own putters to a recent amateur championship meeting, but at the beginning of the tournament made love to one of [Pg 75] mine, borrowed it, and used it until he was beaten—not a long way from the end of the competition. Sometimes it seems that what is rudest in design, almost savage, is now best liked when in our frenzy we have ransacked art, science, and all imagination in search of the putter with which we can putt as we would. There is the spirit of reaction; we would return to the primitive. Putters that look as if they might be for dolls, some of those stumpy little things made of iron on a miniature aluminium-putter model, which some of the great champions have been using, have hardly become popular. The crude and the bizarre, suggestive of inspiration, please well. I shall not forget Jean Gassiat, good golfer of France, coming up to me one championship day at Hoylake, holding forward in his right hand, and with its head in the air, what was evidently meant for a golf club, but which was as much unlike one as anything we had ever seen. On the face of the player was spread the grin of pleasure; wordlessly he suggested that at last he had found it, the strangest, the most wonderful. In principle this new club, as it has to be called for courtesy, is akin to the affair of the door-stopper and the broomstick. It consists of a plain flat rectangular piece of wood about four inches long, two inches wide, and three-quarters of an inch deep, and its two-inch nose is cut quite square, while for a couple of inches at the end of the shaft the grip is thickened to twice its usual size. It is weighted and balanced by large and small lead bullets in the sole. It is possible to frame a good argument in favour of a putter made of anything; nothing is without some advantage. It could be said for a ginger-beer bottle that it would insist on the ball being most truly hit from the middle of the vessel as the ball ought to be hit, and, given notice, one could prepare a statement of claim on behalf of an old boot seeking to [Pg 76] be raised to the putterage. So there are good things to be said for this putter from France, and one of the best is that after smiling upon it Jean Gassiat began to wonder, then thought, experimented, and fell in love with this putter completely. Some weeks later I saw him doing those marvels on the green as are only done when man and putter have become thoroughly joined together, and Gassiat has always to be taken seriously in these matters, for, like Massy, he is a Basque, and, like the old champion, he is one of the most beautiful putters, with an instinct for holing. This most remarkable invention, without desiring its extinction in the least, one would say, surely departs a whole world of fancy farther from the traditional idea of what a golf club should be than the poor Schenectady of the Americans which St. Andrews proscribed. It was not the idea of Gassiat, nor of any other than the Marquis de Chasseloup-Laubat, a French sportsman of thoroughness and a very keen golfer. Seeing what Gassiat was doing, James Sherlock obtained one of these barbaric tools, and at this the public came in.

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Every thinkable variety of putting method has been adopted. Bodies, hands, feet have been placed in all positions, and the stroke has been made in every conceivable way. Are there any two players who do it just the same, or have the same advice to give? For a violent contrast take two of the most able amateurs of the time, both of them long since distinguished in the foremost competitions, Mr. John Low and Mr. H. S. Colt. The former favours the wooden putter, and he has one of that kind to which he is keenly attached, but he putts with all sorts of things as the spirit moves him on consideration of [Pg 77] special circumstances. He was one of the early members of the thoughtful school of golf which has made such a strong advance in recent times. Nearly always, however, you will find him standing nearly upright when doing his putting, grasping a club with a tolerably long shaft somewhere quite near to the top of the handle. This erect attitude is that which our forefathers of the traditions mostly favoured. Those splendid gentlemen, as we have agreed, were fine golfers who conducted their game nobly, but it has always seemed to me that they were an unimaginative lot. It never appears to have occurred to them that because the club has a handle at the top was no reason why they should grasp it up there instead of nearly at the opposite end, as do a large body of the most enterprising and inquiring

amateurs these days. Of this advanced party the eminent architect is a shining example, for he holds his putting cleeck so far down, so near to the ironwork, that the shaft seems useless, and in addition to this he defies all teaching in putting by planting the heel of the club down on the green and holding the hands so low that the toe of the putter is cocked up, and with this toe he hits the ball, and, as it looks, he tops it. But that putting of his is too much for most of the men who have to play against it. When those who do not understand see men putting in this way, or something like it, they say to themselves, and perhaps to others, that they cannot see why the men do not have the unused part of the shaft cut off so that it may not be in the way. But there they show their deficiencies of knowledge, though one is not sure that all the men who putt with a low grip quite know why they do so. They only know that the method suits them, but the truth is often that in these cases the balancing piece of the shaft above the hands acts as a steadier for the piece below. A few students have carried this idea a[Pg 78] point further by having a piece of lead attached to the top of the handle to increase the weight and the balancing influence of that part. Mr. Hammond Chambers is one of them. The amateurs are the most original and peculiar in their putting methods. For the most part the professionals, although adopting widely different stances, hold themselves fairly well up when doing their work on the green, and putt with an easy following-through stroke as is recommended by the old masters. Strange that we should realise that quite the most impressive, stylish, and beautiful putter of the erect school is M'Dermott, the brilliant young American champion, who stands straight up with his legs and heels touching, grips his putter at the very end, and moving nothing but his club and hands, makes the most delightfully smooth swing. The low-grip method is not at all conducive to the gentle swinging, following-through putt, but encourages a sharp little tap.

All the old original philosophy and instruction in putting can be summarised in a very few words, but hundreds of thousands would be needed for discussion of the variations, most of which have been used successfully at some time. The majority of advisers make a point of it that the ball must be hit truly, but they would not all be agreed on what that "truly" was except that it was hitting it as they meant to do. What most of them have in mind is that there is on the face of the putter a proper hitting point, from which the ball will run more accurately and with less disposition to slide off the right line than when hit with any other part, that being the point of balance or the sweet spot which every iron club possesses, and this point should be brought to the ball by an even swing from the back, and the swing should be continued after impact by the steady smooth advance of the head of the club along the line that it was making at the moment of striking.[Pg 79] Absolute steadiness of the body is quite essential, and lack of it—just the most trifling and almost undiscernible lack—is responsible for more putting failures than almost any other cause. Most of those who tell us what to do in golf advise that we should keep the arms and forearms quite still also, and putt entirely from the wrist. And yet even these canons, as they are considered, are defied by large bodies of players. There are thousands of golfers who putt from the toes of their clubs, and believe in the method. They say they can feel the ball better and direct it more surely.

I quote again one of the first preceptors, Sir Walter Simpson, because I think in most matters of feeling and practice he stands so well for the old solid school of golf that has nearly died away. He insists on the wooden putter, to begin with, and maintains that no good thing upon the green can come out of iron, but therein he was mistaken and time has cried him down. And then he writes: "I have just said there are, at most, two or three attitudes in which good putting is possible. We are nowadays inclined to be more dogmatic, and to assert that there is but one. The player must stand open, half facing the hole, the weight on the right leg, the right arm close to the side, the ball nearly opposite the right foot. To putt standing square, the arms reached out, is as difficult as to write without laying a finger on the desk." Had he lived on to these more modern days he would not have been nearly so dogmatic as that. Some of the very best putters do not play with the open stance, but putt entirely from the left leg, that leg thrown forward and in front and bearing all the weight, the right being merely hanging on behind. Then they have the ball right opposite the left toe, and they putt with a sense of strain which they believe in such circumstances is conducive to delicacy. Tens of thousands of others[Pg 80] could not putt in this way, but those who can are very successful, and this is just another indication of the danger of dogma in golf. As to the right arm at the side, it may be said that there is now a fast increasing practice on the part of those who bend down somewhat to their putting to rest the right elbow or forearm on the right knee. J. H. Taylor experimented with this idea on the very eve of the 1913 championship at Hoylake, his putting for some time having been bad. He adopted it, won the championship, and gave the new way of putting all the credit.

Now see how high and deeply thinking authorities can differ about the ways and means of doing this thing that the little child does so thoroughly and well. "A great secret of steady putting is to make a point of always 'sclaffing' along the ground," said the baronet. "The best putters do this, although it is not evident to an onlooker, the noise of the scrape being inaudible. To be sure of the exact spot on the putter face which is invariably to come in contact with the ball, is, of course, essential to the acquirement of accuracy. If you play to hit clean, your putter must pass above the ground at varying heights, as it is impossible to note how much air there is between it and the turf. In the other way you feel your road. But the greatest gain from treating putting as a sclaffing process is the less delicate manipulation required when short putts are in question. At a foot and a half

from the hole the clean putter often fails, from incapacity to graduate inches of weakness, whilst the sclaffer succeeds because he is dealing with coarser weight sensitiveness."

Now time and experience have showed us all that we cannot be dogmatic about anything in golf except that the ball must be struck somehow, and least of all may we venture to dogmatise in the matter of putting, and we will only say now that the late Sir Walter has[Pg 81] a heavy majority against him on this suggestion that in doing the short putts it is well to let the putter scrape along the grass when going forward to the ball. It seems a small matter (that little man child never thought of it, but I noticed he did not sclaff), yet a whole world of good and ill upon the links is bound up with it. We shall set this happy golfer as he was, and friend of Robert Louis Stevenson, against one of the great champions and one of the finest putters who have ever handled clubs, and that is Willie Park, the younger, who says, "One of the secrets of putting is to hit the ball, and the ball only—a sclaffy style of putting is fatal; and, with the object of making absolutely certain of avoiding it, rather aim to strike the globe just the least thing above the ground. The ball should be smartly tapped with the putter, the stroke being played entirely from the wrists; and it should be neither struck a slow, heavy blow, nor shoved, nor should it be jerked."

Most golfers will be with Willie in this matter, and those who have not tried already that way of putting, the sole of the club being kept clear from the turf when the stroke is being made, might do so to their very likely advantage. It is a point that a player of limited experience might never think about, and I know many who have been converted from bad putters to good ones by it. Some of the leading players of the Hoylake school have long been addicted to a slight elaboration or variation of this method. As they bring the club on to the ball they lift it slightly so that at the moment of impact a peculiar running spin is given to the ball, one that is not quite the same thing as is imparted by merely topping it. The way appears to help the hole to gather the ball when it arrives, but it is a method that needs natural aptitude and much practice to make it quite safe in application. And then again, right away to the[Pg 82] contrary, I have witnessed in recent weeks a way of putting by one or two of the best players in the country, which is new, and which they declare to be most effective when dealing with the small heavy balls that are now in vogue and which are so difficult to manage, especially on very keen greens. We have all heard of the push shot, generally done with cleeks and the more powerful irons—and many of us have tried to play it as Harry Vardon does, and the things that I have seen done and described as push shots by ordinary amateurs have been very dreadful. But, no matter; the idea of the push shot is to hit the ball a kind of downward glancing blow, the club coming to ground after impact, the result being that the ball starts off quickly and pulls up suddenly. The players to whom I have referred have applied this stroke to their putting, coming on to the ball above the centre and gently pushing the club through it, and in the circumstances I have indicated there can be no doubt they have succeeded. Balls being so tricky now, these matters are worth considering.

You would perceive how boldly dogmatic was the writer of the early classic on the question of stance. On that point there is just one more word to say. The tendency seems to be increasing in these days towards holding the feet closely together. It is a stance to which Harry Vardon, after all his putting troubles, has nearly settled down, and many of the best men on the green, Tom Ball for one, are given to it. But there is no law, no recommendation even, only the most timid suggestion to be made to any man in this matter. That way which suits him and gives him confidence is the best, and one may find men putting marvellously well when their stance and attitude seem to be so ungainly and difficult as to cause them pain.[Pg 83]

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The method of holding the club has, at least, as much to do with good putting as anything else, and in this matter one may almost dare to dogmatise. The majority of players hold their putters with the two hands close together but detached from each other, in much the same way as they hold their other clubs. All of them have heard of what they call the Vardon grip, or the overlapping grip, by which, when the club is held, the left thumb is brought into the palm of the right hand, and the little finger of that right hand is made generally to ride upon the first of the left hand. Many try this grip for their long shots, but few persist with it, as they become convinced either that their hands and fingers are not strong enough for it, or that before they could master the method they would need to suffer too much in loss of the game that they already possess. Therefore they renounce the overlapping grip entirely. But if they would try it in putting they would experience none of the difficulties with which they are troubled when applying it to their wooden club shots, no sort of force having to be given to the stroke, and almost from the first attempt they would enjoy an advantage. It is a matter of the most vital importance in putting that the two hands should not interfere with each other to the very slightest extent. One of them should have the general management of the putting, and the other, if detached from it, should do little save act in a very subordinate capacity as a steadying influence. Everybody is agreed upon that; it is absolute. But when we have the two hands separate, as with the ordinary grip, there is always a danger of the subordinate

asserting itself too much, or at all events varying in the[Pg 84] amount of work that it does. It cannot be avoided; it is inevitable. This, we may be sure, is the cause of much bad and uncertain putting.

Join the two hands together, as with the overlapping grip, and we have them working as one completely, and the risk of undue interference by the subordinate vanishes. This is the best hint on putting that all our counsellors have to give, and they one and all declare it will do more than anything else to raise a man to the high level of excellence of the innocent child. Sometimes we see men putting one-handed, and one may believe that for medium and short putts this way is more certain than the separate hands. Mr. Hilton once putted that way in the Amateur International match, and I have seen many other good putters do well with it. But it savours of freakishness, and, as a famous professional said to the distinguished player who adopted the method, "God did not give us two hands for one to be kept in a pocket while the putting was being done." The simple truth is that the one-hand way approximates very closely to the two-hand overlapping method. It is nearly the same thing, the same principle—all the work being done from one point. Upon thought, we often come to realise that what appear to be some of the most freakish methods of putting have the same fundamental principle at their base. Thus, take the case of Sherlock, who putts extremely well and consistently. He almost alone, among players of the game, holds his two hands wide apart on the handle of the putter, the left one uppermost, of course. This looks very strange, and at the first consideration it might seem that surely one hand will upset all the good work and reckoning that is done by the other. But the simple fact is that the left is so far away that it cannot interfere, and that is the secret of the quality of this method. When[Pg 85] the left is close up to the right we cannot prevent it from meddling; we are unconscious of it when it is doing so; but get it far away and we have it in subjection, and all that it does in Sherlock's case is just to steady things up a little while the right hand does the business of the time.

Mr. Walter Travis, the most eminent American, than whose putting in the Amateur Championship he won at Sandwich nothing better has ever been seen since time and the game began, long since adopted a slight variation of this overlapping grip, specially for his putting, which, I think, has something to commend it. Instead of letting the little finger of the right hand rest on the forefinger of the left, he reverses the situation, and puts the forefinger of the left hand on the little one of the right, thus leaving the right hand in full possession of the grip, both thumbs being down the shaft. In the other way it is the left hand that has hold of the club with all its fingers, and it will now be remembered that while the left hand is the chief worker in driving and playing through the green, the right is the one that most frequently does the putting.

Having thus mentioned Mr. Travis, one can hardly refrain from quoting some of his instruction in this matter as he once conveyed it to me. "I believe," said he, "that putting should always be done with one hand—with one hand actively at work, that is. The left should be used only for the purpose of swinging the club backwards preparatory to making the stroke. When it has done that its work is ended and the right hand should then be sole master of the situation, the left being merely kept in attachment to it for steadying purposes. When only one hand is thus employed the gain in accuracy is very great. Two hands at work on a short putt or a long one[Pg 86] tend to distraction. When the stroke is being made the grip of the right hand should be firm, but not tight, and after the impact the club-head should be allowed to pass clean through with an easy following stroke. The follow-through should indeed be as long as it is possible to make it comfortably, and, with this object in view, at the moment of touching the ball the grip of the fingers of the left hand should be considerably relaxed, so that the right hand may go on doing its work without interruption. Never hit or jerk the ball as so many players do. There is nothing that pays so well as the easy follow-through stroke."

Yet we find that there is less than ever of that easy follow-through being done in these days, and putting may be no better for the fact, almost certainly is not. These are days when old maxims are being abandoned and new systems are being proclaimed season by season. Jack White, a splendid putter and a magnificent heretic, lately declared that it is time to get rid of what has been regarded as the most inviolable of maxims, "Never up, never in," asserting that the determination to be past the hole in putting, if not in it, leads with these lively balls we now play with to far too many of them running out of holing distance on the other side. His counsel, therefore, is that the ball should be coaxed gently up to the hole with as much drag applied to it as can be. Then for years past it has been recommended that one of the best ways of managing the putting with these speedy balls is to have much loft on the putter, and so in that way do something to create the drag; but lately a change of opinion began to be made, and I am finding some of the best players using putters that are perfectly straight in the face, believing that by their agency they can putt more delicately and with a surer judgment of strength.

It is a little bewildering. Arnaud Massy, the French[Pg 87] player who once won the Open Championship, and who is better at the putts of from six to ten or twelve feet than any man I know, says that he has come to believe that Nature has planted deep down in us a sixth sense, and it is that of putting. In the development of that sense lies the way to success. But after all such meditations as this, I go back to the remembrance of that wonderful

little child who could never miss, and then from it all there emerges the only real secret of success in putting. The child has a quality which we elders do not enjoy, and never shall have it for any length of time. He knows not the hardness of the world. Having innocence and faith he looks trustingly upon it, and the old world and its four and a quarter inch hole is a little ashamed, perhaps. The child has Confidence.

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[Pg 88]

## CHAPTER IV

### OLD CHAMPIONS AND NEW, AND SOME DIFFERENCES IN ACHIEVEMENT, WITH A SUGGESTION THAT GOLF IS A CRUEL GAME.

If men who play games are not proud of their champions, of what then shall they be proud? If we advance the proposition—which is done here and now—that no other game or sport that was ever conceived and played has produced such remarkable strength and mastery in its champions as golf has done, the cynics will find that with the resources of the world and history at their disposal this position of ours can be well maintained, even though we have less than sixty years of championships for our support. And let it be said also at the beginning that we of golf declare to win, not with the Morris or Parks, as might be supposed—good men they were too—but with the moderns, and especially with our Harry Vardon, our Taylor, our Braid, and the amateurs, John Ball, Harold Hilton, and the Frederick Guthrie Tait of immortal and beloved memory. I have long since grown accustomed to the mysterious and the inexplicable in golf, and pass them by on their fresh occurrences in these days as like the commonplace, something for which indeed there may be some explanation and a simple one, but one which the gods, with their humour and their teasing, are hiding from us. We who in this game have fed so long on [Pg 89] wonders are now disposed to overlook phenomena. We tire of sensations and the extraordinary, and would revert to a smooth placidity of plain occurrence. It is in such mood that we often contemplate the records of the past, and then we dismiss them quickly with the comfortable judgment that the Morris were themselves, and, being fixed on a permanent pinnacle, must not be disturbed. They have become a creed. One might imagine little plaster figures of old Tom, his left hand in his trousers pocket, thumb outside, and young Tom in Glengarry bonnet all complete, to have been placed in some over-zealous golfers' homes along with representations of Homer, Julius Caesar, Shakespeare, Gladstone, and Cecil Rhodes, and no questions are to be asked about them. It may be right to place them there, those early champions of the game, but when sometimes steeled to sacrilege and careless of all risk, I set myself to analyse the conditions and circumstances in which they gained their immortal glory, I can give reasons, ordinary worldly reasons, why they gained it; and can thereupon pass them as satisfying every reasonable requirement of human champions of the first degree. But with the others it is not at all like that. Golf being the game it is, the repeated successes of those three great players we call the "triumvirate," Taylor, Vardon, and Braid, at a time when competition is so enormously severe, and when—this point being of towering importance—the luck of the game, always considerable, is, through a variety of circumstances, greater than ever, appear to me, having seen most of them accomplished, and now looking upon the plain printed records of indisputable fact, to have still some elements of impossibility. One has a fear that three or four hundred years from now the golfers of the period may not believe that these things did happen; they may decide that we of this imaginative and progressive age, a little fearful perhaps of greater [Pg 90] wonders that might be accomplished in the future, had prepared a little trick for posterity and had set forth false records of what we had done, so absurd that their falsity was self-evident, and so we were to be pitied for our simplicity. In our humble way, and by stating the records of achievement in the coldest way, admitting moreover that even to us of the time they appear incredible, we do our best to gain favour and acceptance with our descendants. Fifteen Open Championships to the triumvirate, and eight Amateur Championships to Mr. John Ball himself. It is indeed impossible; but it is one of those things in golf that are to be described in the terms that Ben Sayers (who might have been given a championship by the fates for services rendered and skill displayed before the era to which he chiefly belonged was closed, as men are made lords when governments give up) applied to the victory over him by Fred Tait on his own course at North Berwick once by something like seven and six—"It's no possible, but it's a fact!" All of us know one man—perhaps more than one, but we do know one for certain—who nearly all the time that Mr. Ball has been winning those championships might have been winning them himself, has been almost good enough to do so. But he has won

nothing, and after all it may not be a matter of much surprise if we consider the enormous odds against victory in a championship because of the luck of the game, the fact that it is not like running or rowing, billiards or chess, where strength and stamina, knowledge and skill, work out almost exactly every time, but a game in which skill has this element of luck blended so largely with it. But Mr. Ball, Amateur Champion eight times over, and the triumvirate as well!—when "the truth stands out as gross as black from white," with my eyes I can scarcely see it. These persons have forbidden the caprice of chance that was[Pg 91] set to worry them, they have overthrown the laws of averages, they have annihilated the weaknesses of flesh and blood, and they have laughed at fortune and at fate which, defeated, have joined up with them. Then clearly they, with the collection of champions in general for their garnishment, are to be regarded as the sixth wonder of the game.

It is now too late—as it always was too late—to make any fair comparison between the great players of our own time and those who were members in the early years of the Open Championship. There is not so much argument now as to whether Harry Vardon is better than young Tom Morris was, though such argument was common only ten or a dozen years ago. How may you compare these men? Young Tommy won four championships in succession, but there was only a handful of competitors each time, and the opposition was feeble almost to nothing in comparison with what it became a very few years later. Vardon, Taylor, and Braid have each won the championship five times, and many of these victories were gained against their own fellow-champions and the strongest opposition conceivable. Yet though such as Vardon produce what are in a sense more astonishing results in the way of scores, we are reminded that they have far smoother courses to play upon and much improved clubs and balls. Also they have better rivals to sharpen their game. From this one might argue that it would be strange indeed if they were not better than young Tommy was, that it is quite inevitable they should be. But our modern champions have done more than fulfil the obligations laid upon them. They have established an amazing supremacy at a period when golfers are reckoned in the hundreds of thousands; young Tom was champion when there were the hundreds without the thousands. His championship, at all events, did[Pg 92] not mean so much. The championships gained by our triumvirate are proof beyond all possibility of doubt or question that these men are the most exalted geniuses, that they have such a clear superiority over all other golfers of their time as is, seeing the circumstances of the case and knowing the waywardness of golf, almost incredible. The success of the younger Morris proved, as some will hold, only that he was quite the best golfer of a few eligible to compete for the championship.

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After all, if comparison is fruitless and not properly practicable, this speculation as to the merits of the geniuses of nearly fifty years ago and now becomes enticing. One would like to reach some conclusion upon it, but cannot. It would be fine material for a golfers' debating society. Were I to regard myself as advocate for the moderns I should in an agreeable and inoffensive way suggest that time has done nothing to hurt the fame of young Tommy's skill. When what they call the golf boom began and the great game percolated through the mass of ignorant English, there was babble all at once about St. Andrews, and men of southern towns just discovering that the right hand on the driver should be the lower one whispered of the ancient city in a hypocritical manner of respect and awe as if it were high up above the blue instead of a day's journey up the northern lines from Euston or King's Cross. The name of the place was taken in vain, and to this day there are neophytes who lisp of "the Mecca of golf," as they say it, and its eleventh and seventeenth holes, though they have never been in Fifeshire and maybe never will. At the same time and by the same people there was established the vogue of young Tommy Morris, as one might call it. It was nearly sacrilege in[Pg 93] the circumstances, for more people were living then than are living now who had known young Tommy, and fervently believed he was the best golfer who ever played the game. But what we may call the Morrisian traditions were established in this way, and they have laid a shoddy veneer on the really sound reputation of the young champion that it never needed. So the proposition is advanced that through ignorance and affectation and carelessness we posterity are being abundantly generous to young Tom and his father—forgetting Allan Robertson, such is the effect of championships, who was before them, and of whom it was said when he died that they might toll their bells and shut up their shops at St. Andrews, for their greatest was gone. We posterity are of another golfing world completely from that in which those early champions of St. Andrews lived and golfed. I have here in my room a driver with which old Tom played, and I see that the other day some rash fellows, unafraid of ghosts, took out from their receptacles some clubs which had belonged to him and others and played a game with them. But the handling of the old clubs and the looking on the picture of Tom which he once signed for me cannot bring the feeling of his time to ours, and I pass it on as a suggestion to our own posterity that our judgment in this matter, as it has been made, is nearly worthless.

It has been coldly stated that lies are told by golfers. That allegation may be dismissed with no consideration, but it is certain that fancy traditions of flimsy origin gather about golfing history and soon establish themselves in

the most remarkable manner. I know many incidents of the past ten or fifteen years, things I myself have witnessed, the truth of which has become completely obscured by masses of imagined stuff that has gathered on them. To take a good example, more than half the golfers in the world will tell you that [Pg 94] Lieutenant Fred Tait won a championship at Prestwick after wading into water at the Alps to play a shot from there in the final; if they will look at the records they will find that splendid Tait did not win that championship at all, and they should be told that the shot that Mr. Ball made from the wet sand in that same bunker was nearly as difficult and, in the circumstances, more trying. Again, the victory gained by Mr. Travis at Sandwich, so recently as 1904, is now already described in many different ways, but one feature common to all of them is that the American holed a putt of twenty yards on nearly every green, that his driving was childlike in its shortness, and that he was smoking himself to death at the time. Still later, the very next year, there was an Amateur Championship at Prestwick, and I remember that Mr. Robert Maxwell, after a hard struggle against young Barry—who won the championship—had to loft over a stymie on the eighteenth green to keep the match alive, and then at the nineteenth the student was left with a short putt to win that hole and the match. I saw the play in that match and saw the putt, and I believe it was one of about a couple of feet. It was certainly too much to give in the circumstances, far too much, but Mr. Maxwell, great lover of golf as he is, had even by that time begun to tire of the strenuousness and the officialdom and the graspingness of championship tournaments, and he waved his club in token of presentation of the putt to his young opponent and generously shook hands with him. The Scottish spectators did not like it at the time, because "oor Bobbie" was their best and greatest hope, and it seemed like feeding the devil with chocolates to give putts like this to English golfers. By the time that we had returned to the club-house, only three hundred yards away, it was being said that that putt was three feet long, by the morning it had gone [Pg 95] up to three feet six, and increasing gradually it even touched the five-foot mark within the next few years. At that point there was a reaction and, from what I can gather, the putt has settled down in history at four feet. It was half as long.

So I think that golf posterities are fickle bodies, and even the best of them are not nearly so responsible and accurate in their judgments as is believed by those people who trustingly say that they will await the verdict of posterity. I remember that M. Anatole France urged that posterity was not infallible, because he himself and all human beings are posterity in regard to a long succession of works with which they are imperfectly acquainted, and he quotes the case of Macbeth whose reputation posterity has murdered, though Macbeth himself did no crime at all. Macbeth was really an excellent king. He enriched Scotland by favouring her commerce and industry. The chronicler depicts him as a pacific prince, the king of the towns, the friend of the citizens. The clans hated him because he administered justice well. He assassinated nobody. And as M. France remarks, we know what legend and genius have made of his memory. It is that way reversed with all our golfing traditions, and so we must handle them carefully. It is a principle of this game that no man can be a good golfer and a bad man, that those who are bad at heart have not the human qualities necessary for being golfers at all, cannot associate happily with the rest of the community, and so they get themselves properly out of it betimes. Hence it happens that of no golfer is there anything that is bad to be told. We have no Macbeths in this sport of ours, though it embraces some pensive Hamlets, and a number of the moderns would be golfing Romeos if their swings were finished in the old free style. But if tradition had indeed given us a foul Macbeth who [Pg 96] improved his lie we should surely purify the remembrance of him, believing that his immediate posterity had almost certainly judged him wrong.

This case which the advocate has set up against young Tom, with all this blame cast on posterity, will seem a weak thing yet to some. If we were counsel for the boy, who made a fine and a lovable figure in his day, should we bandy with words like that, or put evidence direct and plain before the tribunal, the evidence of those who saw? There are still a few of them left, and for myself I should not have far to send to gain a willing witness. I have a good and valued friend, Mr. Charles Chambers of Edinburgh, member of a distinguished golfing family of many generations, and a fine player himself, who was in the semi-final of the first Amateur Championship. He saw young Tommy at the game, and played it with him. And Mr. Chambers, once answering my plea for some of his remembrances, said, "As a youngster at St. Andrews, I was a great friend of young Tom, the champion, and on a summer evening often accompanied him alone, when, with a club and a cleek, he played out as far as the second hole. He was, I believe, the greatest golfer the world has ever seen, those giants of the present day not excepted. His driving, which I remember so well, was of the long, low, wind-cheating style so seldom seen now, with great distance and carry. He never struck a ball anywhere except on the centre of the club, and this was reflected in the faces of his driving-clubs, which had a clear and distinct impression in the centre, the wood above and below being clean and fresh as when last filed. His putting was perhaps even more deadly, and in ordinary matches I recollect he was seldom or never asked to hole out a yard putt. In driving from the tee, his style may be described as an absolutely correct circular sweep, [Pg 97] with great accuracy and follow-through, and this applied equally to his iron play. It was his custom to wear a broad Glengarry bonnet, which very frequently left his head on the delivery of the stroke.... Without doubt he succumbed to his private sorrows



and a broken heart." That is strong testimony, and the abiding conviction is that young Morris was great indeed, but in the nature of things comparisons cannot well be made between then and now, and are better left undone.

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I am glad that we have thus condemned posterity, for we strengthen the positions of our triumvirate and Mr. Ball at their only point of weakness, which is that their successes have been so marvellous as to be incredible to those heirs of ours who, not being of this period, will not have witnessed them. Posterity may suggest that such persons could not have lived, since none of us will hesitate to say that such posterity will not itself produce a man to win three championships. Even to win one twice is to make a proof of superiority such as in existing circumstances seems nearly impossible. Any man, as one might say, may win a championship; that would prove nothing save that he is as good a golfer as any other, or nearly so; but to win two championships is to prove that he is appreciably better than the others, that he is so much better as to balance with his skill the chances of the game—the putts he missed and the long ones that his opponents holed—that were flung against him. During a period of nearly twenty years the success of Taylor, Vardon, and Braid has been so complete, so overwhelming, so dazzling, that among them they seem almost to have solved the problem of perpetual victory. Each of these men is a genius, a great master of the game;[Pg 98] each of them, had he lived in an age apart from the others, would alone have been enough to make a separate era in competitive golf; and it is a strange freak of fate that they should have been pitchforked into the arena at the same time. It is as if three Ormondes had been in the same Derby, or three Graces at the crease, when at their best; indeed, it is more wonderful than those things would have been. They were born within thirteen months of each other; Vardon and Braid within three months. The last-named is the eldest of the group; he was born at Earlsferry, in Fifeshire, on 6th February 1870; Harry Vardon was born in Jersey on 7th May 1870; and Taylor was born at Northam, in Devonshire, within a mile of where Mr. Ball won his eighth championship, on 19th March 1871. They are of different race; for Braid is a pure Scot, Taylor is pure English, and Vardon, while, of course, we are proud to regard him as belonging to us, is really half-French and half-English. They are of different build, different temperament, and of very different style in golf; but there they are. Among them they have won the Open Championship fifteen times, and when one of them has succeeded it has generally happened that the other two have been his most dangerous rivals. There must be a limit to the period of success as there is to human life, and for years people have murmured that these three are not like the little brook that purls down the hill, and they cannot go on for ever. And yet at the beginning of each new championship an instinct settles in the public mind that they cannot be beaten. Considering what the Open Championship is, what a fearful strain it exerts on temperament, mind, body, and muscle, how a single slip may mean failure, and then how many really magnificent golfers are in the lists, some of them old champions themselves, this is a strange state of things.[Pg 99] I recall that when a championship was played at Muirfield in 1906 the sceptics were then loud in their prophecies that a "new man" would arise, and that the triumvirate would be cast down. And then? James Braid was first, John Henry Taylor was second, and Harry Vardon was third, though a hundred and eighty other players had done their best to beat them! Taylor, the Englishman, although the youngest of the three, was the first to score success. He and Vardon both made their initial appearances in the Open Championship at Prestwick in 1893, and on that occasion the 75 that Taylor did in his first round stood as the lowest made in the competition, although he did not win. At his second and third attempts in the championship he took first place each time, and on the second of these occasions an Englishman's victory was at last accomplished at St. Andrews, the Scottish headquarters of the game. He won there again in 1900, and is the only Englishman who has ever won the Open Championship on this hallowed piece of golfing ground. A year after the others began, James Braid entered the lists, and very quickly then did these three establish their triple supremacy. An injured hand kept Braid out of the great event in 1895, but since then each of the men has played in every championship, and among them have won fifteen times out of twenty-one. At the "coming of age" of the triumvirate in 1913, when it was twenty-one years after Taylor and Vardon started in the event, Taylor, the first to score in it, won his fifth and became "all square" with his friends. That was a remarkable occurrence. Since 1894, when Taylor won his first championship, there have only been five years when one or other of the triumvirate has not won the cup. In 1897 Mr. Hilton got it; in 1902 Sandy Herd, playing with the rubber-cored ball on its introduction, scored; in 1904 Jack[Pg 100] White was the winner, both Braid and Taylor having a putt to tie with him on the last green; in 1907 Massy, the Frenchman, triumphed; and in 1912 the hope of Edward Ray was realised. And in each of these years one of the triumvirate was second.

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But if each of the triumvirate is a phenomenon and collectively they are super-phenomena, in what terms then are we to describe Mr. John Ball, and how shall we account for his eight amazing championships? Mr. Harold Hilton, as all the world understands very well, is a great master of the game, a magnificent golfer who knows it

through and through, and a tremendous fighting man. There has hardly been anything in all golf's history so splendid as his coming again and winning two more Amateur Championships when he had seemed almost done for ever, and very nearly winning an Open Championship as well. But if after considering the professionals at their stroke game, we are now to think of the amateurs in their match-play championship, it is John Ball who is the wonder man. The luck of the game that was emphasised in the consideration of score play is surely greater in the match. At all events, the professionals themselves to a man declare that the score play makes the better test, and therefore is the fairer. If that is so, there is, inferentially, more luck to be conquered by a good man in the amateur event, and Mr. Ball has eight times beaten his fields and beaten all the luck against him. Twenty-four years after winning his first Amateur Championship at Prestwick he wins his eighth at Westward Ho! and, for all the great players that the game has yielded, no other man has gained more than half those wins, and only Hilton has done that. Surely it is a mystery[Pg 101] very profound as to how he has won so often. And yet it is less of a mystery if we accept the proposition that he who plays golf for the sake of golf and fears not to be beaten is the most dangerous of opponents. Mr. Ball's early championships were won by his own skill and his perfect temperament; undoubtedly some of the later ones, which through increasing numbers of opponents have or should have been harder to win, have been gained because he cared little whether he won or not, and because his opponents feared to lose, and feared the more as they felt their impending fate when they had the master of Hoylake laid against them. To a little extent they have beaten themselves, and Mr. Ball has done all the rest. Has there been more than one of his championships in recent times that he has keenly desired to win, that being the one he gained at St. Andrews in 1907, because he wished to be victor at the headquarters where he lost long years before, after a tie with Mr. Balfour Melville? At eight o'clock on the morning after he won his seventh at Hoylake I saw him in the garden at the back of his house giving his chickens their morning meal. It was as if nothing had happened. How many other men would have been feeding chickens so early in the morning after winning an Amateur Championship? Has he finished winning, I wonder? There is a cause to suggest that he has not. He won for his seventh the only championship ever played in Devonshire, and he has won the event on all the regular amateur championship courses on which it is played but one, and that is Muirfield, which has been something of a *bête noire* among courses so far as he is concerned. Once there he suffered one of the biggest defeats of his career, in the international match, and then in the championship he went down in a surprising way to a youngster of Dornoch. Shall he not add Muirfield to his list?[Pg 102]

Despite a certain beauty of his style and the ease and elegance with which he plays the game, Mr. Ball's golf is strongly individual to himself. There are many pronounced mannerisms in it, and they are of a kind that if any one tried to copy them, he might find his game being injured rather than improved. They are the ways of the genius who cares nothing for convention. Few can drive a better ball. At the outset of his career he was a long driver. His first big match away from his native Hoylake was one against Douglas Rolland. It was a home-and-home affair in England and Scotland, and Rolland was greatly celebrated in those days for the length he gained with wooden clubs. Yet he outdrove Mr. Ball but little in that engagement. He obtains his length not to a large extent from run, as most men get it now, but by a ball that starts on a beautiful line, makes a very long carry, and leaves it at that, with a little pull to finish with. It has seemed that he has had more control over his wooden club play than almost any amateur except another of fame who was bred in the same great school. An outstanding peculiarity of his method is the way in which he grips his club, which is done not in the fingers and lightly as by other men, but by a good firm grip in the palms of his hands with the fingers facing up. He makes small use of the thumb and the first two fingers of his right hand. His stance is an open one. His play with his iron clubs again is unconventional. Even for his shortest shots he swings his clubs, meaning that he makes less of a jerky hit at the ball than others do, and he resorts less to cutting the stroke than other great men. But what a master of judging of heights and distance he is! To see him just plop the ball over a bunker in the way and then watch it run the necessary distance afterwards is to understand what marvellous properties of control can be invested in[Pg 103] such perfect human golfing machinery. Another of his peculiarities is that he carries no niblick in his bag, and I think he never has carried one. He has certainly not had one in any of his recent championships. And among many other of his characteristics is that peculiar gait with the bent knees that, because of their climbing over the hilly links, golf seems to develop in men (Harry Vardon has it), his extreme modesty in manner, and the splendid excellence of his sportsmanship. Some one once set forward a curious theory that children born in the winter-time are likely to become better golfers than others; their temperaments are supposed to be favourably affected by the prevailing rigour of the weather conditions! It is, anyhow, a curious fact that a very large proportion of our best players were born in mid-winter months, and of them all John Ball is the greatest, and he, if you please, was born on a day so far removed from midsummer as Christmas Eve.

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There has been lately a sort of revival of the game of attempting to punch another man so very hard that he can stand up no longer to make the smallest punch in answer. He has to be battered and pounded until he is made

practically lifeless for a period of ten seconds, and then the other man is given the money. This is what we call the "noble art of self-defence," but, obviously, it is nine parts of such defence to reduce the other man to such a jellified condition that no more defence is needed. When well played it is a good game. Now golf never has been called a "noble" game at all. It is "royal" and it is "ancient," and it leaves its qualities to speak for themselves, as most eloquently they do. The boast has indeed been made for golf that, while in so many other English sports something flying or running has to be killed or injured,[Pg 104] golf never calls for a drop of blood from any living creature. It is then inferred that it is a gentle game, as in some ways it really is. Also it has been demonstrated that it is a game at which elderly men may play and play quite well, as was proved in a recent year when golfers who are becoming older than they like to think of won so many of the trophies. But the result of this boom in the noble art of squashing another man for a prize of a few thousand pounds and the brave words that some of the lovers of this sport sometimes use, telling us that things like this made English hearts so strong, nearly giving us to understand that Sayers and his like had some influence on the fortunes of the British Empire, is that a kind of reflection is cast upon some other sports for their mildness and their timidity. Girls do not fight in rings and nearly kill each other, but girls can play golf and do, and they even play with men.

Let us consider the proposition that golf is a game that needs a greater and a stronger heart than any other game. It demands fine manliness, such determination as strong Englishmen are made of, and courage of the best. The strain of a severe golf competition on the men who win, or nearly, is enormous. No weakling has ever won success at golf, and never will. The truth is that it is such a game that if the charge is made that it is a brutal sport we can barely stand for its defence. For there is cruelty in golf, cold hurting cruelty in this game. If now you hesitate, consider. The difference between the effect of boxing and the effect of golf on the human system is that golf hurts more and the pain is more enduring, for it is psychological. That may seem like an attempted escape from the proposition, because it may be suggested that maiden aunts can and do bear such psychological pain at golf, and bear it well. But we discuss real golf of the[Pg 105] championship kind, and match play wherein two good and keen players are really playing against each other, parry and thrust as it is in championship golf, with the issue in even balance most of the time, not taking sevens and eights and so being nearly indifferent to what the other may do until the clerking takes place on the putting green and the state of things is calculated.

Golf, as we know, is a game for the emotions. We agree that it plays upon them continually, and chiefly through the medium of the supreme emotion, hope. While this hope is the most uplifting of emotions, it is also, with the strain it makes, by far the most exhausting. Now every golfer knows that in the real game if a good stroke is made by one party the gain is not only in the extra nearness to the hole that his own ball obtains, but also by the "moral effect" the shot has on the other man. This other may have been in a good state of hope before; now he receives a sudden shock—and it is indeed a shock sometimes when in a second, as the result of the other's effort, his hope is reduced to fear or complete dejection. Do you think the man who made the shot does not know that? He knows it well. There! he knew! The dejected man has foozled, and the hole has gone. This bout is ended. There is a rest of a few seconds, and then the contestants start again and smash each other on the mind, just as they did the other time. Some may suggest that the effect of these mental hurts is small, that they draw no blood, and that they are not to be compared with a left hook on the jaw which sends a boxer toppling. To that there are replies to make. In the first place it has to be remembered that a match at golf between two good players (we do not now write of habitual foozlers in whom the golfing emotions cannot, in the nature of things, be well developed) is taken very seriously indeed, and therefore the emotional[Pg 106] effect is greater than might be supposed by one who does not play. Second, the effect is cumulative, and every golfer knows again how intensely depressing is the continual fight against a relentless opponent who scores with nearly every stroke and never lets one's hope burn bright again. Bang goes every shot of his on the sensitive temperament of his foe, and that is exactly why temperament has all to do with success at golf. It is the man who can stand punishment who wins; no other sort ever has won in greater golf, or ever will. And then again, if it is suggested that mental pain is after all not such a hard thing to bear with courage as pain of body, let us ask which has the longer effect, remembering also that, with full respect to boxing people, the golfer is a man of keener feelings. In championships how often has a man who has had a punishing match in a morning round, one that has gone to the nineteenth hole or after before victory has come to him, won again in the afternoon? Not frequently. If you had merely with a fist blow knocked that man senseless for a little while before his lunch, he might have been readier for his golfer opponent in the afternoon. It is notorious that some of the finest play in championships has been accomplished by men who were enduring much physical suffering at the time. And again, how exactly is the effect of the winning putt on the defeated man like that of the knock-out blow. His last hope is extinguished with the suddenness of vanished consciousness. So this psychological pain is a very discomfoting thing. The law recognises it, and herein the law is surely not an ass. We have the legal cruelty of the divorce court. Husband who tells his wife he dislikes her new hat or gown is held to have been cruel as though he had smacked her pretty face, or something worse than that. He could kiss away a red mark from a dimpled cheek, and surely if[Pg 107] permitted he would do so, but nothing could change the judgment on the hat. And in golf the mental injury is more real than that.

Never was more absurdly untrue suggestion made against this game than that it is not like others where men play directly against each other and foil each other's shots, that it is a game in which each man plays his own ball independent of the other. Each stroke we make has effect on the stroke made by the opponent. That effect may be discounted by the opponent's own strength and resource, but yet it is produced. In no other game does a man play right and hard on to his opponent as in match-play golf, for it is a game in which the whole temperamental strength of one side is hurled against the strength of the other, and the two human natures are pressing bitterly and relentlessly against each other from the first moment of the game to the last. It is the whole man, mind and body. That is the meaning of the temperamental factor in golf, and that is why a great match at golf is great indeed.

Yes, it is a cruel game, one in which the primitive instincts of man are given full play, and the difference between golf and fisticuffs is that in the one the pain is of the mind and in the other it is of the body.

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A climax in our wonderment has been reached, and though a volume could be written on the romance of the rubber-cored ball, the seventh of the wonders of the game and the most modern, the story after all is known. Golf would have gained on its old degree of popularity if there had been no such invention and men had continued to play with gutties; but that the golf boom as we know it would have been created, that the game[Pg 108] would have risen to be the enormous thing it is, giving pleasure to hundreds of thousands of people all the world over, there is much reason to doubt. One night in the early summer of 1898 Mr. Coburn Haskell sat at dinner with a magnate of the American rubber industry, at the house of the latter in Cleveland, Ohio. They were both golfers, and naturally they talked golf during their meal. They agreed that a kindlier ball than the harsh and severe gutty was needed, and they thought that surely it might come through rubber. Eventually they settled on the idea of rubber thread wound under tension to give the necessary hardness, and an experimental ball was made accordingly. With the very first shot that was made with that first of rubber-cored balls a professional player to whom it had been given to try carried a bunker that had never been carried before! From that moment the great revolution was begun, the most extraordinary that has ever taken place in any game. There were setbacks, it was a little slow in starting, but its success was sure. In 1902, when Sandy Herd won an Open Championship with the new ball, after prejudice had held it back in Britain previously, the gutty was done for, and it quickly disappeared from the links.

And oh, the ravings and the riotings of argument there have been about that ball since then! And the hundreds of thousands of pounds that have had to be spent on courses to make them suit it! Never was there such a giant commotion nor such a costly one caused in any sport before. We need not argue any more whether it has improved the game or spoiled it. These discussions are for the schools. It has anyhow made the game in the modern popular sense, and now we are informed that of this little white ball, that was first invented at the dinner-table on those Ohio summer nights, half a million are used on British courses in one[Pg 109] week in a busy season, and a million pounds' worth are bought and consumed by golfers in a year. Then you may be sure that more than a million dollars' worth are driven and puttied on the courses of the United States. Marvellous little ball! Indeed you are the seventh wonder of your game.

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[Pg 110]

## CHAPTER V

### **A FAMOUS CHAMPIONSHIP AT BROOKLINE, U.S.A., AND AN ACCOUNT OF HOW MR. FRANCIS OUMET WON IT, WITH SOME EXPLANATION OF SEEMING MYSTERIES.**

Abiding wonders of the past, perplexities of the present, the greatness of the game where it is still greatest, have been among recent thoughts; and yet one is conscious all the time that something which sure enough comes near to being the eighth wonder of it all has lately happened, and will for long enough be high in the minds of this community, something that will never cease to be discussed and will always be regarded as a matter for

argument and speculation. Only because it is so very new, so utterly modern, so contrary to much of our olden faith, so inharmonious with the smooth story that we have learned and liked, has a witness hesitated to give it a forward place well won. Yet do we not know that a hundred years from now, when so much of golfing history yet unmade will have been piled on to the dusty records that we hold, this new wonder will still be a theme for club-house talk, and if by then matches are played with the people of other planets, will they not wish to know in Mars how this strange break came about? Then there shall be as many readings and explanations of the mystery of Brookline and of Ouimet as there have been of the moods of sad Prince Hamlet. So from the old[Pg 111] traditions, the famous players, the ancient links, the scene may move to new America.

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To the Fourth of July there shall now be added the Twentieth of September. In the year of nineteen hundred and thirteen it fell upon a Saturday, and that day at Brookline, near Boston in Massachusetts, was dripping wet. Clouds had run loose for two whole days and nights before, unceasingly, and still sent their torrent down. When, dull and splashing, the morning broke, with expectation in the air, it seemed that this had been planned by fate for a day of wretchedness and misery, one that might with convenience afterwards be blotted out from memory and considered as a *dies non*. But good Americans will now recall no clouds, no rain, no damp, no mud when they remember the Twentieth of September. I too, though my feelings then were more of wonder and real admiration than of joy which my own patriotism could not sanction, shall be glad to remember in time to come that then I was at Brookline and was one of only two or three from Britain who saw the amazing thing that was done that day, the most remarkable victory ever achieved in any golf championship anywhere at any time. It was something to have seen; it is a distinction to have the remembrance. On that day Francis Ouimet, a boy of twenty, bred to the game on the cow pastures of Massachusetts, played Harry Vardon and Edward Ray, great champions of British golf, for the championship of the United States—and won. They three had come through the great ordeal of a full championship and tied for first place together. They played, not against blank possibility as men, knowing not the exact nature of their task, have to do in Open Championships[Pg 112] where the test is play by score and each is against all others, having then some fears stilled by sweet hope which is ever the golfer's sustenance, but in sight of each other, together, one with another, man against man, ball against ball, seeing what was being done, knowing what had to be accomplished next. Could there ever again be such a three-ball golf? It is one of the compensations of having been so very wet at Brookline on that awful day that one knows that for the wonder and the drama of the thing it can never happen more, not ever. If such facts could be repeated, the wonder would be missing and the drama gone.

An American and two Englishmen. These championships are mainly matters for individuals after all; the "international element," of which we read so much in newspapers, is not generally so deeply felt as we try to think it is. Golf, not being a game of sides as other games are, and, if it comes to that, not generally a game in which national peculiarities exert an influence, hardly lends itself to international treatment. Players who feel internationally before a contest relapse to individualism completely when they are pitching to the green and putting to the hole. Do not tell me that in the throes of a six-foot putt that shall win or lose a day a man thinks of his trusting country and not of his tortured hopeful self. It is not possible in the combination of golf and human nature, and there is no blame to the men. But on the Twentieth of September international feeling in the game of golf did for once rise high, and became a very real thing. What of individualism had been maintained by Vardon and his companion during that week had nearly disappeared on the nineteenth, when the tie was made, and there was hardly a trace of it when the curtain went up on the fifth act of the amazing drama of Brookline, none at all when it was rolled down again.[Pg 113] This point is now emphasised because when I write of the wonder of the thing I have to show that not only was this Brookline boy, of no championship whatever save one of Massachusetts, pitted against two of the greatest golfers of the home country of the game, but that, the international feeling being now alive and intense, he for America was opposed to those two of England, and therefore in a very full degree he was playing their better ball. The boy was playing the better ball of Vardon and Ray! He beat them! A long time has now elapsed since the dripping day when I saw him do it, and wonders have a way of softening with age, yet to me now that achievement is as wonderful as it was when new, and so it will remain. The American golfers are justified in their pride and their exultation upon the result of that event, and there is nothing whatever to be said against it. No such feat had ever been performed before, or has been since. I shall describe the circumstances which led up to this amazing triumph, and what ensued.

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Only once before had British players gone across the Atlantic to take part in the Open Championship of the United States, and that was in 1900 when Harry Vardon and J. H. Taylor did so. At that time Taylor was the

Open Champion, Vardon having finished second to him in that year's tournament at St. Andrews. American golf was then comparatively a baby, and practically all the opponents of the British pair were players who had been born and bred in the home country and had gone out to America as professionals there. Good as some of them were, they were no match for their visitors, who had the competition comfortably to themselves and finished first and[Pg 114] second, Vardon becoming champion. Much happened in the next thirteen years. Most significant was the breeding of an American champion on American soil, a "native born," in J. J. M'Dermott, who tied for first place in 1910, but then lost to Alec Smith on playing off, and tied again the next year when he won, and again in 1912. About the same time two other native players in Tom M'Namara and Michael Brady came to the surface from the raw mass of rough golfing material that was taking shape under the American sun. Both are good men, and from my knowledge of them I like their manner and their style; but M'Dermott, despite some serious faults of which he has been made aware, is undoubtedly a marvellous golfer for his age. I think he has to be considered as the most wonderful prodigy the game has so far known. At twenty years of age, when he came over to Muirfield as American champion to compete for the great Open Championship, he was even then a most accomplished golfer, high in the topmost rank. Not tall in stature but well and lithely built for a golfer, he has a full, easy, and graceful swing. It is round like most of the American swings—but not so round as it used to be—and M'Dermott is often afflicted with what is commonly known as the American hook, being a most persistent tendency to pull the ball. It is remarkable also that he has been in the habit of using wooden clubs of most abnormal length, and it has been a wonder to me how he has controlled them as well as he has done. The history of the Open Championship, marked with so many crosses for tragedies and the blighting of fair hopes, embraces few incidents more pathetic than the driving of three balls into the Archerfield woods by M'Dermott in the event of 1912 at Muirfield, and his failing to qualify in consequence. But he was only twenty then. The first[Pg 115] expedition made by a native American to this country in quest of Open Championship honours consequently failed. In the following year we saw him again at Hoylake, and with him his brother natives, M'Namara and Brady, and some of the Scoto-Americans also. M'Dermott did the best of the three, and his play for nine holes one morning was very nearly perfect. His swing was a little more compact than before; it was beautifully timed, and his straight-up style of putting with his heels touching and his grip upon the end of the shaft was most attractive. He found the conditions on the last day too severe for him, as nearly all except Taylor, the champion, did; but he made a fine display and became the first real American player to get into the prize list of the Open Championship, which he did with a score of 315—eight more than Taylor—which made him tie for fifth place. M'Dermott undoubtedly excels in temperament.

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Here was a menace. It was felt that America was making very good in golf. And there came vaguely into the minds of British golfers the idea that a demonstration of their strength should be made in this new country, for satisfaction and for the sake of national pride. Yet, with their conservatism, our British golfing people are slow to move in matters of this kind. They are content with the game, and perhaps wisely so. But there was the feeling that something should be done. With initiative demanded, Lord Northcliffe, who had become a keen lover of the game, made a characteristic movement unobtrusively, as the result of which Harry Vardon and Edward Ray were sent across the Atlantic to test the strength of American golfers in their own Open Championship. Vardon was then five times Open[Pg 116] Champion of the world; Ray was the holder of the title. Two other Europeans sailed the seas with the same object in their minds, one of them being Wilfrid Reid, the clever little professional attached to the Banstead Downs club near London, a man who had gained international honours constantly and has much fine golf in him, and the other Louis Tellier, the professional of the Société de Golf de Paris at La Boulie, Versailles. Four good men; two great champions; one the greatest golfer the world has known. They seemed to be enough. Their design was to win the American championship.

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Those who were not at Brookline during the week that followed, and only received a result that was amazing and inexplicable, were ready enough, perhaps not unnaturally, to suggest that this course of the Country Club could not have afforded a proper test, that it was so far different from a good British course, so mysteriously American, that the native players must have been favoured by it, and the superior skill that the British golfers possessed had no opportunity for an outlet. As I say, this was not an unreasonable supposition in the light of the amazing events that occurred; but it was entirely wrong. There are few courses in America that are better than this one, and to this judgment I would add that though there are inland courses in England that are superior there are not many. Judged upon the best standard of inland courses in Britain I would call it thoroughly good.

It has seven holes of over four hundred yards each, one of them being five hundred and twenty, and, the total length of the round being 6245 yards, it was good enough in this respect. It has three short holes, well separated, and some of its drive-and-iron-holes are quite[Pg 117] excellent. The Brookline course differs from many others in America in the quick and varied undulations of its land—heaving, rolling, twisting everywhere—and thus calling for adaptability of stance, and careful reckoning of running after pitching at every shot. By this feature the play is made as interesting as it should be, but often is not. Only two of the holes on the course are quite flat and plain, and these are novelties. They are the first and eighteenth, which take straight lines parallel to each other through the great polo field alongside the club-house. Polo is a considerable feature of the scheme of the Country Club, and its comparatively small territory is not to be interfered with for the sake of the golfers who have so much more of Massachusetts for their delectation. Yet it is necessary to play through this polo field. Consequently we start the round at one end of it and play a hole of 430 yards right along past the grand stand. Then away we go out into the country, over the hills and along the dales, and through the trees and cuttings where rocks were blasted, and, after many adventures, return to the smooth plain land of the polo field as to the straight run home at the end of a steeplechase, and play along positively the plainest 410-yard hole I have ever seen. The tee is at one end of the polo field, with the grand stand in the middle distance on the left. There is not a bunker along that field, but there is rough grass on the left of the part designated for the fairway, and there is the same with a horse-racing track as well on the right. At the far end of the field, near to the club-house, the race-track, of course, bends round and comes across the line of play. Just on the other side of that track the ground rises up steeply for three or four yards, and then up there sloping upwards and backwards is the putting green. Thus the race-track becomes a hazard to guard the green, and the green is on a high plateau with big trees[Pg 118] all round it. The hole is there all complete, with hardly a thing done to it by man, and it is one of the most remarkable examples I have seen of a piece of ready-made golf of the plainest possible description, resulting in something fairly good. It is 410 yards long, and if the tee shot is a little defective the attempt to reach the green with the second is going to be a heartbreaking business. With a good drive that second shot, played with a cleek perhaps, or the brassey may be needed, has to be uncommonly well judged and true. The margin for error is next to nothing. At the first glance at it I thought that this eighteenth hole was very stupid, but it is a hole that grows a little upon you, and the original impression has been withdrawn from my mind. It was the last hope of Vardon and Ray, and it failed them. The fairway at Brookline is far better than on the average American course, and if one says that its putting greens are among the very best in America, the greatest possible compliment is paid to them.

There have been many touches of romance in the history of golf at the Country Club, but none more remarkable than that associated with the construction of the comparatively new ninth, tenth, and eleventh holes, two long ones with a short one between them, which are among the nicest holes in all America. For some years after the beginning of this century, when golf at Brookline had become a very big thing, these holes did not exist, their predecessors being embraced in the other parts of the course. But, for the crossing that they involved, those predecessors had become dangerous, and it was determined to take in a new tract of land, and to make three new holes upon it. It was a tremendous undertaking, for "land" was only a kind of courtesy title for the wild mixture of forest, rock, and swamp into which a man might sink up to his neck, but for which about 25,000 dollars had to be paid,[Pg 119] while another thirteen or fourteen thousand dollars had to be spent in making it fit for golf and preparing the holes, so that these three cost an average of about thirteen thousand dollars a hole, or roughly £2500 as we may say if we are English. At the ninth as much rock had to be blasted as some one afterwards used to make a wall two hundred yards long, and the best part of a yard in thickness. The tenth hole is a very delightful short one, with the green in a glade far below the tee. They call it "The Redan," because Mr. G. Herbert Windeler (long resident in America, but English in nationality still, despite his past presidency of the U.S.G.A.), who is largely responsible for the golf at Brookline, and designed and superintended the construction of these holes, had the famous piece of golf at North Berwick in his mind when he planned this one, but before the end he departed far from the original conception, and all for the good of the hole. When it was being made the place for the green needed raising from the swamp, and nearly two thousand loads of broken rocks were deposited there; and after soil to a depth of eighteen inches had been laid upon the stone foundation a splendid putting green was made. With all its variety, this is not a course of such intricacy and such mystery as St. Andrews is, to need long weeks of study and practice to understand every shot upon it. You may play St. Andrews from childhood to old age and yet be puzzled and mistaken sometimes, but Brookline is more candid than that, and it is to its credit that with all its variety you may be completely acquainted with it in a very few days. Let me say then that the suggestion that Mr. Ouimet had a distinct advantage in a knowledge of the course obtained in his childhood, and maintained thenceforth by frequent practice on the course near to which he lived, is quite nonsense. He had no advantage whatever. Vardon[Pg 120] and Ray had practised there for several days in advance, and if they did not know all about it that there was to know it was their own fault. They did know, and local knowledge, which counts for far less with great golfers than men a little their inferiors, had nothing to do with the issue.

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Now consider the other circumstances, that the proper meaning and significance of the result may be understood, and that neither too much merit shall be awarded, nor too much blame. There were about a hundred and sixty competitors, and I would call the field a strong one, but of course not nearly so strong as the field for our Open Championship. Such men as two of the triumvirate were missing, and a highly respectable company of past champions, while there were no such English amateurs in the list as Mr. Graham, Mr. Lassen, and Mr. Michael Scott to make an occasional disturbance. But there were other amateurs. Compared to a British open championship field it was weak at the top and weak in the middle. Everybody who goes to our open championships knows that there, for three parts of the trial, there are comparative nobodies bobbing up from nowhere and creating all kinds of excitement by breaking the records of the courses, and fixing themselves up elegantly at the top of the list. There they sit like civilians on an imperial dais, but always they topple off before the end. Not one of them has ever remained to the finish, so that if the American entry was weak in this respect, Americans might argue that it did not matter anyhow since this middle part was not the one to count. Yet it always has its effect. But then the Americans may also point out that they too had their middle men who came to the front and created disturbances, only quitting the heights in time to make room[Pg 121] for the winner and his attendants. There was young M'Donald Smith, and there were Barnes and Hagin, who had come up out of the wild west—and one of them, saying it respectfully to his splendid golf, looked a cowboy too—and were distinct menaces until the last rounds came to be played. Then in estimating the strength of this American field remember that M'Dermott, who is undoubtedly high class, and was in the prize list at the Open Championship at Hoylake, was not nearly a winner here, and remember also that imported players of the high quality of Tom Vardon and Robert Andrew were not in it either. Altogether it is my judgment that the field was stronger than imagined in England, yet not nearly so strong as ours. Following a favourite American practice of reducing to percentages every estimate, however necessarily indefinite, such as even the comparative charms of wives and sweethearts, I would give the strength of a British field the hundred, and I would give sixty-five to this of America. I knew that I should fall to that percentage system some time, and now I have. For its strong variety, and for its flavour of cosmopolitanism, it was an interesting entry. The professionals all over the States—and the amateurs, too, for that matter—came up to Brookline from north, south, east and west, for what they felt was a great occasion, and over the border from Canada they came as well. Up from Mexico came Willie Smith, the Willie who was teetted in golf at his Carnoustie home, and whom we never shall forget as he who broke the record—and holds it with George Duncan still—for the old course at St. Andrews in the very last round that was played at the beginning of an Open Championship meeting there a few years ago. It was really a wonderful field, and its units presented a wealth of material for study and contemplation in matters of style and method during the first day or two. And yet for all the variety[Pg 122] of players I doubt whether there was so much difference in ways as we see in a big championship at home. The American golfing system is a little plainer, I think. Of course it was by far the largest entry that had ever been received for the American open event, and this fact necessitated a departure to some extent from established American custom, and one which we of Britain with unenviable experience of many processes in qualifying competitions could not congratulate the Americans on having to make. However, the numbers were not so large as to cause such trouble, even with a qualifying competition, as we experience in England and Scotland, and consequently a two-days' affair worked it smoothly through, the field being divided into two sections, and each man playing his two rounds off in one day and getting done with it. It was settled that the top thirty players in each section, and those who tied for the thirtieth place, should pass into the competition proper for the championship, which, as here and elsewhere, consists of four rounds of stroke play, two on each of two successive days.

The United States Golf Association always manages its championships very well indeed with no more red tape than is necessary, but with an exactness of method which might serve as a fine lesson to some other great golfing countries that I have in mind. In this present case Mr. Robert Watson, President for the year of the U. S. G. A., after all his splendid work as secretary of the Association, was in charge of all the arrangements and as administrator-in-chief was the most energetic man during the whole of the week at Brookline. It was fitting that in his year of presidency, so well deserved, there should be this ever memorable happening to mark the season out from all others. Mr. Herbert Jacques, Mr. G. Herbert Windeler, and Mr. John Reid, the new secretary of the U. S. G. A., were in the nature also of[Pg 123] generals of the headquarters staff, and they laboured constantly in an upper room late at night working out the details of business when other persons on whom responsibility was more lightly cast, with cocktails to help, might be pondering over the tense problem as to what was going to happen next. The general idea of the system was much the same as we have it in Britain, as there is hardly much scope for variety in matters of this kind.

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Now—Ouimet. It is easy for the Americans and others to compose anthems about him now, but little enough did they know or think of this Massachusetts boy until they saw that he was really winning, and then the remark that I heard of an ex-American champion to him in the dressing-room shortly after it was all over, "Well done, Francis, and there are lots more in the country like you!" was not only lacking in compliment and taste, but was not true. America is by no means full of Ouimets, and never will be. I had met him at Chicago in 1912, and heard of him next in a letter that I received just before starting for America in the following summer, which gave me particulars of what happened in the match in the closing stages of the Massachusetts State Championship between my old friend, Mr. John G. Anderson, and Mr. Ouimet, in which it was stated that Mr. Ouimet had done the last nine holes in that match as follows—yards first and figures after: 260 yards (4), 497 yards (3), 337 yards (4), 150 yards (2), 394 yards (3), 224 yards (3), 250 yards (3), 320 yards (3), 264 yards (3). So he did the last six holes in 17 strokes, and no wonder that poor John remarked, "I have never played in any match in my life where I did the last six holes in three over 3's and lost four of them, as I did on this[Pg 124] occasion!" Of course Mr. Ouimet became State champion, and I determined to have a good look at him as soon as I got on the other side of the Atlantic. On the day after my arrival in New York I was down at the Garden City Club, the Amateur Championship taking place there the following week, and at lunch time Mr. Anderson, who was at another table with Ouimet, called me over. "Well, Mr. Ouimet, I suppose you have a big championship in your bag this season," was just the proper thing to say, and he answered something about doing his best, but feeling he might be better at stroke play. "Then," said I, "there is the Open Championship to take place in your own golfing country," and with that we tackled the chicken. He is a nice, open-hearted, modest, sporting golfer, and was only twenty years old in the May of his great championship year. Tall, lithe and somewhat athletic in figure and movement, he takes excellent care of himself in a semi-training sort of way. He abstains from alcohol entirely, and though he smokes a few cigarettes when "off duty" he rarely does so while playing, having the belief that the use of tobacco has a temporary effect on the eyesight, such as is not conducive to accuracy of play. He agreed entirely with a suggestion I put to him, in conversation, that most golfers make the mistake of playing too much and lose keenness in consequence, and he thinks that the American players in general are by no means at such a disadvantage as is sometimes imagined. The winter rest gives them extra keenness in the spring and summer, and that is everything. He does not play at all from November to April, but keeps himself fit with skating and ice hockey, while during the season he only plays one round three times a week, and two full rounds on Sundays. Business considerations—he is engaged at a Boston athletic store—have something to do with this[Pg 125] system, no doubt, but he thinks it sound. I looked at his bag of clubs; there are no freaks in it. It comprises ten items, an ivory-faced driver, a brassey, six irons including a jigger and mashie niblick, and two putters, one being of the ordinary aluminium kind and the other a wry-neck implement, the latter being most used. As to his style of golf, its outstanding characteristics are three: it is plain, like the style of most American golfers, and free from any striking individuality; it is straight; and it is marvellously steady and accurate. A marked feature of most of the American players is that their swing is very round and flat, and that they get a pronounced hook on their ball. Mr. Ouimet's swing is rather more upright than that of most of the others, he keeps an exceedingly straight line and has full length—as much as Vardon. I said he had no peculiarities, but there is just this one, that he grips his club with what is called the interlocking grip. This is a way of grasping the club that some professionals employed during the early period of general transition from the plain grip to the overlapping. Mr. Ouimet's little finger of the right hand just goes between the first and second of the left hand, while the left thumb goes round the shaft instead of into the palm of the right hand. Such a grip may suit a man who uses it, but it can hardly have any advantages. I note as a further peculiarity that the right forefinger is crooked up away from the shaft, so that the tip of the finger only comes to the leather at the side. This has to some considerable extent the effect of throwing that finger out of action, and as a means of reducing the right hand's power for evil is not to be condemned. Many other players have sought some such method of crippling the very dangerous hand.

But after all it is not the shots he plays, good as they are, dependable as they always seem to be, as the[Pg 126] qualities of temperament with which they are supported. He has a golfing temperament of very peculiar perfection, wanting perhaps in imagination but remarkably serviceable to his game. He seems to have the power to eliminate entirely the mental oppression of the other ball or balls; he can play his own game nearly regardless of what others play against him. From the mere sporting point of view he misses something in the way of emotions perhaps, those rare emotions which some of us derive when we are fighting hard to keep our match alive and at a crisis become hopelessly bunkered; but he gains enormously in strokes and successes. When he settles down to his match or round, he can concentrate more deeply than any other man I know or have heard of. He sees his ball, thinks what he should do with it, and has the course and the hole in his mental or optical vision all the time, just those and nothing else. The other balls do not exist, and the scores that are made against him do not exist either. He has told me that in important golf, and indeed in that most mightily important play-off against Vardon and Ray, he was wholly unaware until it came to the putting what his opponents had done, and generally he had not seen their balls after they had driven them from the tee. Vardon and Ray pounded away as

hard as they could, but their shots had no more effect on Ouimet than the patting of an infant's fist would have on the cranium of a nigger. He just went on and did better. Andrew Kirkaldy once said of Harry Vardon at the beginning of his career that he had the heart of an iron ox, and that is like Ouimet's. This championship will always be something of a mystery; but in this statement about the Ouimet temperament there is the nearest thing to a solution of it that can ever be offered. I know that what I say is the simple truth, partly from observation,[Pg 127] partly from inquiry, and partly from Mr. Ouimet's statements to me. He said he was unaware of the presence of the crowd on the fourth day when he made the tie until he was in the neighbourhood of the seventeenth green.

See how interesting he becomes despite the plainness of his game. When such achievements as his of the 20th of September are made they rarely suffer from any want of added romance. On the day in question Mr. Ouimet, champion as he had become, told me in a talk we had, how he began the game when he was about four years of age. He was a French Canadian by blood, but his parents had come over the border and their little family settled at Brookline close to the sixteenth green of the Country Club. His elder brothers played a kind of golf, and he watched them and began to practise himself on some pasture land near his home. Then he became a caddie at Brookline, played the game more seriously than before, with three clubs that a member of the Country Club gave to him, and at sixteen years of age won, at the second attempt, the championship of his school. They make a feature of school championships in America. This story was attractive enough, but the next day, reading the American papers, one gathered that there was some of the romance of a Joan of Arc about this boy of Brookline. His mother said that when Francis was a little boy of six or seven he would cross the road and sit for hours fascinated by watching the members of the Country Club at the game. Then he wanted to become a caddie, and maternal objections did not avail. He became a caddie. His mother also said that he learned much of the game then, and would always try to get engaged by the strongest players, and he would copy as well as he could their best strokes. He passed from the grammar school to the Brookline High School, but[Pg 128] his mind was more on golf than on his books. The mother used to hear noises up in his room at night. Once she was frightened by what she heard, and went to his room at midnight fearing that he was sick. She found him putting on the floor, and he then confessed that he had often done that kind of thing before. On that occasion he had thought while in bed of a new grip and wished to try it. He did not care to wait until the morning. The parents desired their son to get all advantage from education that he could, but after two years at the high school he insisted on leaving and was engaged at a Boston store where golf goods are dealt in. All that and more was said of him.

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In a narrative of this kind circumstances and reasonable deductions are everything, and shots are next to nothing, for there is little enough to be said about a ball in the air or its place of stopping. Only one man knows the truth about a golf stroke as it is played, and that is the man who plays it. Very often even the most expert observers are quite wrong in their inferences and judgments. I have explained most of the circumstances already. On the first of the two qualifying days, Mr. Ouimet came very near to taking first place in the list, for he had a score of 152, and only Harry Vardon beat him, and by one stroke only, as the result of a long putt on the last green of all. The weather was fine and the greens were fiery on that Tuesday. Next day there was more wind and there were indications of a change of weather coming. Autumn gusts were breaking the leaves from the tree-tops. That day Ray headed the qualifying list with 148, Wilfrid Reid was next to him with 149, M'Dermott was 161 and Mr. Travers was 165. This was good business[Pg 129] for England, even though it yielded nothing but a little temporary prestige. Then came Thursday, and in the early morning and up to a little while after play began there was much rain, and the greens were considerably slowed down. They were, indeed, reduced to a soaking state in time, and Tom M'Namara told me that once or twice he had actually, instead of putting, to root his ball with a niblick out of the greens, into which they had buried themselves on pitching. But Brookline stood the weather test very well.

First rounds are seldom eventful; the value of the play done in them seems to be discounted by the circumstance that there are three more rounds to come. M'Dermott did a 74 in this round, Vardon and Reid 75's, Mr. Ouimet 77, and Ray 79, but even M'Dermott was three strokes behind the leaders. In the afternoon round Ray recovered brilliantly with a 70, Vardon and Reid both did 72's, and Mr. Ouimet 74; and at the end of this first proper day Vardon and Reid were at the head of the list with aggregates of 147, Ray was next with 149, while Mr. Ouimet was seventh with 151. Again the British invaders looked well in their place, and that night they were strong favourites for the championship. "America has a fight on hands," "Little left but hope," and such like, were the headings in newspapers. As I lay in bed at the Country Club that night, I heard the rain pour ceaselessly down. It rained all through the night and alas! all the next day as well, and the great events of that Friday were watched through a heavy downpour. In their third rounds Vardon did 78, Ray 76, and Mr. Ouimet, who was playing nearly a whole round behind the others, and with wonderful steadiness, did a 74: and so it came about that with the competition three parts done, all these three were at the top with aggregates of 225. Now was the time for the

Englishmen's efforts if they[Pg 130] were to be made. To their own chagrin they could not make them when they needed. Ray took 43 to the turn, in his fourth round, Vardon, whose putting all the week was distinctly moderate, and the chief cause for his inefficiency, took 42, and though both finished better, their two 79's were bad and seemed to have cost them the championship. Vardon certainly thought they had, and took a very gloomy view of things. I spoke to him a little while after he had finished, and he said he was sorry and that they could not win then. His putting had let him down, he said, as he had been afraid it would, though he felt that the rest of his game had never been played better. "There are three or four out there who will beat us," said the melancholy Vardon. It looked like that, but the American hopes one by one failed to materialise. Hagin fell out; Barnes fell out; M'Dermott fell out. Goodness! it was going to be a tie between Vardon and Ray after all, and these two Englishmen would play off here at Boston for the American championship! Hereupon said Englishmen came out to see what was happening, and looked happy again. They smiled. Then men came running and breathless from distant parts with tidings of Ouimet. He had had a worried way to the turn, but had improved afterwards, so rumour said. I went along with our British champions to pick him up at the fourteenth green, and there when he came along, we found that if he did the last four holes in a total of one under par he would tie with the leaders, or, in other words, if he did the miraculous and practically impossible he might be permitted to have a game next day.

I shall never forget watching that boy play those last four holes; that was the real fight for the championship. Their respective lengths and par figures are 370 yards (4), 128 yards (3), 360 yards (4), 405 yards (4).[Pg 131] They were stiff pars, too, you will see, with nothing given away, especially as the turf was soaking. At one of those holes he had to gain a stroke on par if he were to tie, and the others must be done in par. A slip anywhere would surely be fatal. It seemed that that slip was made with the second shot at the fifteenth, for he was wide of the green on the right and had to pitch from the rough, but he was dead with his third and got the 4 after all. At the sixteenth he holed a three yards' putt for the 3 and still was level with par. The much-wanted stroke was given to him at the next hole, which is a dog-legged thing bending to the left, with rough and bunkers to be avoided. He played it with good judgment always, and this time, on the green with his second, he holed a nine-yards putt for a 3. Thus he was left to get the home hole in 4 to tie, and by holing a five-feet putt with not a second's hesitation, just as if everything in golf had not seemed to depend upon it, he tied. Jupiter!

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According to American golfing law and precedent the tie had to be decided by one extra round, all three playing together. I have no fault to find with this arrangement; perhaps the result would have been the same if two rounds had had to be played. I know, however, that Vardon thought it would have been better and proper if each had played separately, with a marker. Most people thought that as Ouimet was almost playing the better ball of the two Englishmen he could not possibly win. Theoretically he was sure to have slept badly overnight and to be in a terrible state of nerves in the morning. They might see him top his first tee shot and be three strokes to the bad on the first green. Really I had no such[Pg 132] ideas, and when I saw him hit his first drive as well, cleanly and straight as any drive ever need be made, I had no doubts about his having slept. Vardon drove the straightest ball and then deliberately played short of the muddy race-track in front of the green, but Mr. Ouimet boldly took his brassey, went for the carry, and just did it. The hole was done in 5 each, and the second in 4 each; but at the third Ray, who had driven too much to the right and had a bad stance below his ball, only just got to the corner of the green, a long way from the pin, with his second, and then took three putts, thus dropping a stroke behind the others. At the fourth and fifth, at the latter of which Mr. Ouimet put a spoon shot out of bounds through his club slipping in his hands, but recovered splendidly with the same club, the score remained the same. Then at the sixth, a drive and pitch up a hill, Vardon approached to within three yards, and the others to within six yards of the pin, Vardon holing his putt and Mr. Ouimet (who decided on consideration to concentrate on his 4) and Ray just missing. So Vardon was then one stroke better than the American, and the latter still one less than Ray who, by a better run up from the edge of the green at the seventh, scored over both his opponents. At the eighth there was a dramatic episode, for Mr. Ouimet laid a low approach stone-dead and holed for a 3, while Ray ran down a twelve yards' putt for another 3, Vardon being beaten here though getting a perfect par 4. All were level and the excitement and suspense intense. Something was expected to happen at the ninth, the longest hole on the course, and a great, romantic piece of golf. It is a long, heaving hole carved through rock, and partly built on a swamp, and away in the far distance is a high plateau green which, seen through the rain and mist, looked like a ghostly thing in the clouds. Here[Pg 133] Vardon slashed out for length, but with a hook sent his ball into the woods. Yet he recovered well, and after stress and strain by all three this tortuous hole was done in five each. The parties were all level at the turn with 38 strokes each. Immediately afterwards Mr. Ouimet went to the front, and was never deprived of the lead. The tenth hole is the short one named "The Redan," with a heavily bunkered green low down in a valley below the tee. Each tee shot was right, but Vardon and Ray were poor on the green and took three putts, while the American was down in one less. Vardon looked serious now, and Ray was fidgetty.

There were three 4's at the eleventh, and then Mr. Ouimet reached the twelfth green with his second, four yards from the pin, Vardon and Ray being just off on opposite sides. They both took five to hole out. Mr. Ouimet, by boldness, might have gained two strokes here, but he was a trifle short with his putt and was satisfied with a profit of one. This was followed by Vardon holing a three-yard putt and getting a point back, but at the fourteenth there were ominous signs of the British game collapsing, for Vardon went into the woods again, Ray shot off wildly to the right with his second, and they were both well out of it with 5's, like Mr. Ouimet whose brassey shot went too low to clear properly a bank in front. Mr. Ouimet told me that at this stage he felt he was going to win. Not one of the three had been bunkered so far, but at the fifteenth Ray was caught and, needing two strokes for recovery, was virtually done for.

The last stage of the struggle lay between Vardon and Mr. Ouimet. Both got 3's at the short sixteenth. Vardon was looking anxious and worried, for most brilliant play on his own part could not save him now, and he could only hope that Mr. Ouimet would come by disaster. Instead of that he himself, trying to cut[Pg 134] the corner of the dog-legged seventeenth too finely in an effort to gain distance, was bunkered. Ray, in wild desperation, had hurled himself with terrific force at the ball on the tee in an impossible attempt to carry straight over the bunkers and the rough in a straight line to the green. As to Mr. Ouimet, he just played an easy iron shot to the green dead on the line of the pin and holed a six-yard putt for 3 and a gain of two clear strokes. It was really finished then, and in the circumstances the playing of the last hole was a formality. Mr. Ouimet did it steadily for par 4; Vardon was caught in the race track before the green and took 6, and Ray holed a fruitless putt for 3. Mr. Ouimet was champion, and there was an end of it. Seeing that history was made, let me set down the scores:—

FIRST HALF												
Ouimet	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	3	5	—	38	
Vardon	5	4	4	4	5	3	4	4	5	—	38	
Ray	5	4	5	4	5	4	3	3	5	—	38	
SECOND HALF												
Ouimet	3	4	4	4	5	4	3	3	4	—	34—	72
Vardon	4	4	5	3	5	4	3	5	6	—	39—	77
Ray	4	4	5	4	5	6	4	5	3	—	40—	78

Mr. Ouimet's score exactly equalled that of the better ball of Vardon and Ray.

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I shall say no more about what happened immediately afterwards than that the American crowd gave a hearty demonstration of the fact that they were very pleased indeed. A considerable sum of money was raised by a collection for Mr. Ouimet's little caddie,[Pg 135] Eddie Lowry, who was a wonder of a mite and inspired the new champion throughout the week with all sorts of advice. He would tell him in the mornings to take time over his putts as it was then only ten o'clock and he had until six at night to play; would remind him again at a suitable moment that America was expecting great things from him, and, above all, whispered gently to him on handing him his club for each shot that he must be careful to keep his eye on the ball! It is declared, moreover, that at the beginning of the tie round he assured his master that a 72 would that time be forthcoming. Little Eddie Lowry had his share of glory.

And now what about it all? How is it to be explained? Vardon and Ray generously and properly admitted they were beaten fairly and squarely on their merits. They could not say otherwise. I believe that Vardon came to the conclusion at the end of his American tour that he played worse golf at that championship than anywhere else, but on that final day on which everything depended he did not play so badly as he may have thought, and his putting was better than usual. I would not like to guarantee either Englishman to do much better in the same conditions at any time. On the other hand, Mr. Ouimet was blessed with no special luck, except that negative kind of luck that kept his ball out of trouble always, and made two putts invariably sufficient. His driving was as long as Vardon's, and he was the straightest of all, while he missed some putts by half-inches. He played a bold game too, and the only semblance of timidity was in occasionally being a trifle short with long putts, while Vardon and Ray, desperate, but in proper principle, were giving the hole every chance and often running past it. Mr. Ouimet seemed to general his own game so thoroughly well. Talking to me afterwards, he[Pg 136] explained completely his policy at every shot in the match, and showed himself to be a thinker of the finest strain. He was all for running approaches instead of pitched ones that day, because he feared the ball embedding itself in the soft turf, and also felt that when running it would be more likely to shed dirt that it picked up and leave him a

clean putt. Everything was considered and well decided, and in his argument one could find no flaw. And he insisted that he just played his own game and never watched the other balls. "Looking back on it all," said he, "I think it was just this way, that Vardon and Ray rather expected me to crack, not having the experience for things like this as they had, and when the time went on and I did not crack but went along with them, I think it had an unfavourable effect on them. That is the way I reason it out, because when you expect a man to crack and he doesn't, you lose a little of your sureness yourself. I began to feel that the championship was coming to me when we were about the fourteenth hole, for Ray then seemed to be going, and he was swinging rather wildly at the ball." I think that Mr. Ouimet's explanation was tolerably near the truth. Some of the secret history of this championship may never be written, but I know that Harry Vardon realised when it was too late that he had been paying insufficient attention to what Mr. Ouimet was doing, and what the possibilities were in that direction. At the beginning he felt that the real contest lay between him and Ray, never dreaming that Mr. Ouimet could hold out against them. Therefore he concentrated on Ray, as it were, and when he had Ray beaten he realised too late that there was some one else. It may have made no difference, but a thousand times have we had demonstrated to us the capacity of our champions for playing "a little bit extra" when it is really needed. Anyhow it[Pg 137] was Vardon's own mistake, if it was one, and he is very sorry for it.

A consideration of great importance is the way in which this victory was confirmed, as it were, by the other events of the week. It does not generally happen that the men who distinguish themselves in preliminary qualifying competitions go through winners of championships afterwards. Men can rarely play their best for six rounds in succession, and, the law of averages being at work all the time, they would rather perform indifferently in the first test, so long as they qualify, than beat all the others. I do not recall a case where the champion would have been champion if all six rounds had been counted in, instead of the four of the competition proper. But this time at Brookline we had seven rounds played, and the astonishing fact is that, if all seven rounds were counted in, Mr. Ouimet would still be at the top with a score of 528 against Ray's 530 and Vardon's 532. I think that this is a point which has not been much realised, and it is one of importance in dealing with the idea that a fluke victory was achieved. You can hardly have a fluke victory in four stroke rounds; much less can you have one in seven. Now I would suggest that if Vardon and Ray had dropped behind in the scoring, and had occupied other places than they did in the final aggregates, there might have been some good support for the fluke theory. Their defeat by several people would have needed far more explanation, because it would have been clear that, for some reason, they were beaten by golfers inferior to themselves. Conditions and climate would have become considerations of greater importance. But merely the fact that these men finished second and third in such a big field indicates that there was little fluke anywhere, for this was a marvellous vindication of form in[Pg 138] competition, in a game where form is so much affected by fortune. And, finally, the fact that Mr. Ouimet beat these men in the play-off when he had them both there in sight, playing stroke against stroke with him, and not an invisible field without any definite menace as in the previous play, was quite enough to stamp him as the most thoroughly deserving champion of that week. British golfing pride will force the suggestion to many minds that such a thing, proper as it was on this occasion, could never happen again; that if the championship were replayed in the same conditions Mr. Ouimet would be beaten. But of how many champions could it be said that if they had to play the event over again a week or a month later, the luck of the game being what it is, they would repeat their triumph? Reflecting once more that this was but a boy of twenty, and the real greatness of our players being what it is, I am more amazed than ever at what has happened. It was an American victory and America takes the credit, but, again, the United States are by no means full of Ouimets. I look upon him as a first-class prodigy, such as the game has never known before, produced in the country where such a golfing prodigy was most likely to make his appearance. He accomplished what had never been done before, and what I feel sure will never be done again, and because it was such an historic happening, and there were so few from England there to see it as I did, I have told the tale in full. Nobody believes that Mr. Ouimet is as great as Harry Vardon and Edward Ray. He could not be. But also I do not think that any one else could do what he did at Brookline on that occasion. I found, a long time after the occurrence, that many wise American golfers, reflecting dispassionately if still proudly upon it, gave a certain satisfaction to their reason by suggesting as a final explanation that a[Pg 139] miracle had happened. That is a good way out of our difficulties, and for my own part I accept it, for it is the only explanation that will stand all tests. A miracle happened at Brookline on that Twentieth of September.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE BEGINNINGS OF GOLF IN THE UNITED STATES, AND EXPERIENCES IN TRAVELLING THERE, WITH AN EXAMPLE OF AMERICAN CLUB MANAGEMENT.

There is little done to solve the mysteries of golf's beginning by pressing into the farthest recesses of American golfing history. Only by such little twinklings in the darkness of the almost prehistoric period of the game do we begin more to suspect that, being such a natural and simple thing, an almost inevitable kind of pastime despite its man-made intricacies and laws, and all its heartenings and maddenings, it came up of itself in different places, when man had reached full intelligence and the desire to play properly other games than such as bowls. Those Indian braves who wandered and hunted and fought over that magnificent land when in its virgin state must have tried to knock something like a ball, or a stone, in the direction of a particular mark, and that would be a game for them. I remember hearing that several years ago a visitor to one of the reservations found several of the red men playing golf of a kind, with real clubs and balls. "Purple Cloud" was the champion of the braves. Then in the autumn of 1903 another white wanderer looked in upon the Indians in the reservation at Montana and reported that he had witnessed a very spirited game. Golf, said he, is [Pg 141] much better suited to the Indian of to-day than his old game of lacrosse. He noticed very few subtleties in the game. When the champion, "Spotted Horse," drove off, there was a long stretch of clear prairie, with only here and there a shrub, so that the game resolved itself into a chase of the ball for a couple of miles and a return, the one who did it in the fewest strokes being the winner. He saw some really capital drives, several well over three hundred yards, he thought. The only thing that was very new and characteristic about these red men's golf, so far as he could see, was that the spectators "made a most infernal row all the time that the play was in progress." When a brave took his stance for a tee shot, it was looked upon as the signal for a perfect bedlam of yells and howling, which should have disconcerted the player but did not do so. And with my own eyes have I seen the modern Indians playing for the American championship, and it might be claimed that though laws be made at St. Andrews, and interpretations thereof in the council chamber of the white men at New York, this after all, in essentials, is a game that is native of the soil. Yet the history of such a game down the Indian line must be hazy as the history of the braves themselves, and we must leave it now with this ample recognition.

But though in names and other matters there is a Scottish flavour in some of the records of the earliest American golf, and when it became a real and growing thing it was obviously imported, one is sometimes inclined to think that the Simpsonian theory of the spontaneous generation of golf, or what approximated in essentials to golf, must have applied to America as to other countries. A stick, a ball, a mark, and there is the principle of golf fully indicated.

In a primitive way also it was played in America in the seventeenth century, and, as in the homeland, some of [Pg 142] the earliest references to it that remain take the form of warnings of the punishments accruing to players who departed from such severe restrictions as were imposed. It was not proclaimed what advantages would be yielded men who played, as is done to-day, but what grievous penalties they should suffer if they played it when and where they should not, and alas! the times and places that were forbidden appeared to be many in proportion to those when the game might be enjoyed by those who liked it. Then as now, and in America as in happy England, those who were not of golf were against it, and bitterly. There were jealousies then as ever since. There were those often-quoted Laws and Ordinances of the New Netherlands of 1659 in which, because of a complaint by the burghers of Fort Orange and the village of Berwyck about the damage done to their windows and the danger to which they were exposed of being wounded by persons who played golf along the streets, the golfers were threatened of consequences to come. Then clearly the game was played in South Carolina in 1788, for at that time an advertisement appeared in a local newspaper thus: "Anniversary of the South Carolina Golf Club will be held at Williams's Coffee House on Thursday, 29th instant, when members are requested to attend at 2 o'clock precisely, that the business of the Club may be transacted before dinner." Here there is a clear indication of the close connection maintained between the playing of the game and the social ceremonies about the dinner-table that were held by the golfers on the same day in the way that was practised by the early golfers of the Scottish centres and of Blackheath. For many years afterwards these meetings of the South Carolina Golf Club were held at the club-house on what was known as "Harton's Green," which is now in the heart of Charleston. Perhaps this was the first golf club-house in America, and [Pg 143] if that were so it shared the fate of pioneer establishments in many other places where towns have widened and gathered in the outlying lands. There is also preserved in the archives the form of invitation that was sent to Miss Eliza Johnston to attend the ball of the Savannah Golf Club at the Exchange hall in that city in December 1811. And then American golf seems to have

lapsed and slept like Van Winkle in the Catskills until the time of the great regeneration came near the end of last century. One does not come now to make a history of American golf, but only to indicate that new and republican America also has something in the way of golf traditions.

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The real beginning of American golf was made, as you may know, out at Yonkers up the Hudson, and Mr. John Reid, the elder, is rightly regarded as the father of American golf. Such recognition being of long standing and his claims being incontestable, he was again publicly and officially proclaimed as such at the silver jubilee celebration that was held in New York on November 19, 1913. That was twenty-five years from the time when the game was really set going in the States. One night I sat over a log fire in a club-house in Massachusetts and heard the story of the foundation by his father from the lips of Mr. John Reid, the younger, secretary of the United States Golf Association. He told me how his father and Robert Lockhart, who went to the same school in Scotland, came to America together; how Lockhart who, as a buyer of goods, had to pay periodical visits to his homeland, talked of the strange game that was played there; how Mr. Reid became interested and asked for clubs and balls to be brought across the water; how he tried the swings and strokes in a field by their house at [Pg 144] Yonkers, the son "fielding" for the father; how the captain of a steamer was persuaded to bring another set of clubs over with him, and how irons were thereafter cast in America. Then he told me how other people, few but keen, were attracted to this new pastime that the Reids were trying, and how the first little club was formed here at Yonkers in November 1888, and called the St. Andrews Golf Club. They were as the golfing fathers. I learned how the members came to be known as the Apple Tree Gang because of the tree near to the first hole on which they hung their coats; how six holes were laid out at the beginning on Mr. Reid's land, his house being used as a club-house; how he gave a medal which was the first prize ever put up for competition in America—and it was for an annual thirty-six holes stroke competition—and how it was won for eleven years, three in succession, by Mr. George Sands. Those were days of consequence. From that little beginning the St. Andrews Golf Club of Yonkers, after many changes and enlargements, has risen to a place of importance and honour in American golf.

These little histories and traditions of American golf do become attractive as one probes more deeply into them. It was in Massachusetts that the most remarkable thing that has ever taken place in the history of the game on the other side of the Atlantic, or anywhere perhaps—meaning, of course, the Ouimet triumph—happened lately, and I have been much attracted to the story of the beginning of golf in that part of the American world, and not less so when I see that the start was made such a very little while before the birth of the boy who won that great championship at Brookline. American golf and Ouimet have grown up together. One finds that in the summer of 1892 a young lady from Pau went on a visit to Mr. Arthur Hunnewell, at Wellesley, Mass., and took with her a [Pg 145] set of golf clubs and balls. They had been playing the game for a long time past at Pau, but it was only just being started in other parts of France. After Yonkers it had been reproduced at Shinnecock and one or two other places, but so far Massachusetts had not known it. The girl showed Mr. Hunnewell how the clubs were used, and some relatives of his, owning adjacent estates and being fond of outdoor pastimes, watched and were won quickly to the game. On the first of June Mr. Hunnewell wrote down in his diary, "F. B. arrived to-day from Europe"; and on the fifteenth of September, "We are getting quite excited about golf." A fortnight later he wrote that "J. B. is here and plays golf all day." I calculate it as a coincidence worth remark that twenty-one years afterwards, to the month and to the week, Mr. Ouimet won the great championship.

Many of Mr. Hunnewell's friends were invited to come and attempt the game at his place, which they did accordingly and fell in love with it. He had fashioned a course of seven holes of moderate length over undulating lawns and some park-land. The actual holes consisted of five-inch flower-pots sunk in the turf, and the hazards were avenues, clumps of trees, beds of rhododendrons, an aviary, a greenhouse, and an occasional drawing-room window, as it is facetiously remarked by Mr. Lawrence Curtis, who became the first secretary of the golf committee of the Country Club, and to whose account of these happenings I am indebted for my notes upon them. Mr. Curtis, seeing the fascination that the game exercised upon all who became acquainted with it, wrote a letter to the executive council of the Country Club informing them of it, suggesting that it was a pastime that might very well be brought within the scope of the club, and that the cost of an experimental course need not exceed [Pg 146] some fifty dollars. The suggestion was backed by several members and the council agreed, the course being laid out in the spring of the following year. The home hole was placed on a lawn in front of the club-house which was soon discovered to be a very dangerous place for it, so that it had to be removed. Almost immediately the game became a strong attraction at the Country Club, new members came along in droves because of it, and it has flourished ever since. The example of this powerful club was followed at the Essex County Club at Manchester, then just being begun. Mr. Herbert Leeds, now so closely and honourably associated with Myopia, won the Country Club's championship in 1893 with a score for eighteen holes of 109,

Mr. Curtis being next with 110; and that summer a Country Club side won a team tournament that was played at Tuxedo against the St. Andrews and Tuxedo Clubs. And afterwards all went very well indeed.

And while I write in this way of the grand pioneering work that was done in those days when champions of the present time were being born and trained, I am reminded of a conversation I once had with Mr. Edward Blackwell, in which he told me of his going out to California in 1886 and staying there for six years. His people had bought some land in those western parts, and he and his two brothers went out there to convert it from barley to a vineyard. Mr. Blackwell is a very great golfer to-day, but considering the gutty ball and circumstances in general, he was, relatively to his contemporaries, as great then. Only about a week before he sailed for California a match was arranged between him and Jack Simpson, who had gained the Open Championship the previous year, and Mr. Blackwell won that match at the last of the thirty-six holes that were played. Out in California there [Pg 147] was plenty of hard work to do on the land and good sport with the gun, but, of course, there was no golf. Mr. Blackwell's thoughts frequently turned towards it, and he missed it very much. He considered the possibilities and found that they were practically non-existent, for the country round about was too hopelessly rough for laying out any sort of holes. So he never saw a golf club and never hit a ball during those six years, but for all that he won the King William IV. medal at the autumn meeting of the Royal and Ancient Club immediately on his return. Then he went back to California and did not see club or ball for another five years. Some of us could almost wish he had made some sort of course out there in California and become the first golfer of that far west, for he would have been so good to have been a pioneer, and golf has flourished there exceedingly since then. California sends men to championships. It would have given a special piquancy to that fateful amateur championship final at Sandwich in 1904 when Mr. Blackwell was his country's last hope against America's Mr. Walter Travis, and as it happened he was not quite equal to the occasion, for the American captured four holes at the start with his amazing putting, and he won by as many at the end.

That was a great day for American golf, a kind of consummation it was, and I shall never forget the queer sensation that filled the atmosphere on the St. George's course, nor the dumb feeling, not exactly of dismay but of incomprehension, there was at the end. As to the first of these sensations I believe that nearly everybody felt—without knowing why exactly, for comparatively few had noticed his play until he got to the fourth or fifth rounds and was appreciated as dangerous—that the American player was nearly sure to win, that nothing could stop him from winning. It was a conviction. [Pg 148] Certainly Mr. Travis's wonderful putting had created a very deep impression, but if he had been a British player I think the feeling would have arisen that putting like that, which had been continued for the best part of a week, would be sure to give out before the end. Take the case, for instance, of Mr. Aylmer in the championship of 1910 at Hoylake. He had been putting in the most amazing manner all the time, and holing them from everywhere, but nobody had any confidence in his ability to beat Mr. John Ball in the final, and he collapsed utterly. Of course, Mr. Aylmer then had not the tremendous fighting power and pertinacity of Mr. Travis in match play, qualities of their kind which I have only seen equalled by a successor of his in the American championship roll, Mr. Jerome Travers, and to beat Mr. Ball at Hoylake is a different matter from beating Mr. Blackwell at Sandwich. But then they were saying that Mr. Aylmer could not go much farther even when he was only at about the third round, and as for Mr. Ball at Hoylake there was a considerable feeling among golfers about that time that the old champion could not go on defying the law of averages any longer, and that there could be no more championships for him. I confess that I rather shared this view, held in a superstitious sort of way, but now that Mr. John has clapped another championship on to that Hoylake affair, we have given him up. There is no reason why he should not win another eight! However, when the Scot and the American teed up that fateful morning there was a disposition to be sorry for Mr. Blackwell, and a kind of hope that the end might be painless. In the circumstances Mr. Blackwell's performance in losing nothing more after losing four of the first five holes was as good as it could be. He kept the pump working splendidly. [Pg 149]

The truth is that he was by no means so gloomy as his friends about his prospects, as he told me afterwards. He said he thought he had a good chance of winning, and did not believe he would get beaten. He wished, however, that the tees had been farther back so that his long driving would have given him a better advantage. Two things about his opponent impressed him very much, one, of course, being his astonishing putting and the other his silence. But then, of course, one does not work one's way into a final of a championship for conversational purposes, or for debating the merits of the sixth sub-section of one of the rules of golf. When the deed was done completely Mr. Blackwell joined the converts who departed from the old prejudice and raided Tom Vardon's shop for Schenectady putters, with which they practised, and marvelled as the sun was setting on the first day that any but a British player had won a British golf championship. With that victory the first era in modern American golf, not counting the prehistoric times of golf in Charleston and the Indians' games, came to an end. America had made good. Now she became a power.



The second era lasted nine years and was one in which she gradually came to be taken more seriously. She suffered a set-back of sorts when Mr. Harold Hilton won the American Amateur Championship at Apawamis in 1911, but there were some circumstances attending that victory at the thirty-seventh hole which were rather galling to the Americans, and they behaved well in saying so little about them. Mr. Hilton ran away with the match in the final, as it appeared, and Mr. Fred Herreshoff in the afternoon was offered about the most forlorn hope that golfer ever had to lighten his way for him. He brightened it up and made it thoroughly serviceable, and was distinctly[Pg 150] unlucky in being beaten at the extra tie hole when Mr. Hilton's bad second shot cannoned off the famous rock to the right and went kindly to the putting green instead of getting into a hopeless place. It has been said that even if Mr. Hilton's shot was lucky, Mr. Herreshoff played the hole so badly that he hardly deserved to win it even if he was hardly treated by losing. But it is forgotten that it was match play, and that what one man does affects the other's game, and Mr. Herreshoff told me once, long after, that the American crowd, which is supposed erroneously to be many shots to the advantage of an American playing against an Englishman, on that occasion misled and upset him. It cheered for Mr. Hilton at the wrong time and for the wrong thing, and led to Mr. Herreshoff making a hash of a most fateful stroke. This era of American golf came to an end with the amazing victory by Mr. Ouimet at Brookline.

The present state of things is very remarkable, and I have found the study of it very interesting during two long golfing expeditions through the United States, when I have visited many of the chief American clubs, met and made friends with men who are at the head of American golf and the most distinguished players, and in every way gained a good practical knowledge of the amazing progress of the game in this country. The Englishman who visits America and is not a golfer suffers a loss that he must regret always afterwards. To strangers in general the Americans in their own country are kindly and hospitable. That touch of carelessness and arrogance which is sometimes noticed in the wandering American when he is "doing Europe" is not in evidence among good Americans when they are at home, always provided that the Englishman has the good sense and manners—which one regrets to say is not always the case—to remember that when in the[Pg 151] house of his host it is not good taste to praise his own for its superiority in divers ways. Pay the American now and then, and with proper delicacy, that little compliment that is so very well deserved about the magnificence of his achievement in making a country like that in such a short space of time, and about the excellence of many of his established systems. It is a compliment that can and should be paid with the most absolute sincerity. The American has the right to be proud of his own country, and we should be proud of the American, for that his blood is much the same as ours—trite observations, no doubt, but commonly disregarded. Then with all his fancy hustle and his tarnation smartness, the American is at bottom rather a sentimental man (perhaps it is because he has to be so very businesslike most times that he is liable to a sharp reaction at any good chance) and he is touched with signs of genuine good feeling towards him and an appreciation of what he has done. Thereupon in a softened voice he will tell of his weaknesses, and of his appreciation of the greatness of mother England, and he will play the host in a more thorough and warm-hearted way than any other man on earth will or can. The ordinary non-golfing visitor may find out many of these things, and have his own good time in his simple way, but even in the freest countries there are often social omissions, accidents, and disasters when there is not good common ground for meeting and friends in waiting, and it is very possible to go to America and fail in the way of holiday. The man who visits as a golfer, enters at once into joys of existence and the most friendly companionship. I have visited clubs in many parts of the country, and have made good and abiding friends among countless golfers, and it is but a poor expression of my feelings to say that I am very appreciative and deeply grateful. If, therefore, for anything whatever[Pg 152] I should criticise the golf of the country I hope that American golfers will believe that in my comments there is no trace of adverse prejudice.

It is difficult to estimate how many players of this game there are in the country at the present time, and whatever figures were fixed upon would soon be made inaccurate through the rapid increase that is going on all the time—more rapid by far than is the case in Britain. I have seen it estimated that there are six or seven hundred clubs in the States at the present time, with a total membership of about a hundred and fifty thousand. The Americans say that they will double their golfing population in the next five years.

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It is impossible for a person who has not crossed the Atlantic to imagine the United States as the country and people really are. I found it easier to imagine Italy and Spain and oriental Morocco before ever I went to those places, than I did to conceive a picture of the country and the life of our own blood relations in this new America. All the fraternising with Americans in London and elsewhere, our reading of their newspapers and their books, printed in the words of our own language, pictures and photographs of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbour, of the sky-scrapers in the background and the Fifth Avenue that glitters on a summer's day, all the pictures of Boston and Washington, or of the boulevards and business activities of Chicago, will not help any

one to preconceive those places exactly. The atmosphere and the life and the ways of the people are a little beyond the imagination of the untravelled western man. In the same way I do not think that British golfers who have not been to the United States can understand the American's present-day[[Pg 153](#)] attitude towards the game; certainly those who have not been to America should not judge upon it as they are often inclined to do. It is good, sound, and in its every aspect it is exceedingly interesting.

Wandering through the country I have visited many clubs and courses. If we would have much golf in America we must move quickly as the Americans do, and think as little of travelling all night as they think, for it would be too much waste of time to make the long journeys that have to be made by precious daylight. As a rule the golfer at home protests against being asked to play anything like his best game after a night in a railway train. I remember Mr. H. E. Taylor, who is not possessed of the strongest constitution in the world, told me that he had set off from Charing Cross one morning in the winter, arrived at Cannes in the south of France at breakfast time on the next morning, cleaned himself and put on his golfing shoes, and then gone along to the golf course out at La Napoule to win a scratch gold medal. Again I recall that Mr. Hilton once travelled all night from Hoylake to Muirfield and broke the record of the course there on arrival, playing two more rounds the same day. However, men like these are exceptions to most rules.

But a golfer may cure himself of more of his weaknesses and susceptibilities than he may think he can—all that are imaginary and not really of the temperament. A man who hates wind and avoids it would learn to play well and bravely in it if he had always to take his golf on an exposed part of the eastern coast. The ability or otherwise to play in wind is largely a matter of temperament. So it is with the journeys. I had either to golf, and golf for me tolerably well, in the intervals of scampering from one part of the country to the other, or I had to spoil the whole expedition. I managed it somehow.[[Pg 154](#)]

Arriving in New York for the first time early on a Sunday morning, I fixed myself up at my appointed quarters, rang up a golfer on the telephone, and then, according to arrangement, proceeded to track a man down at his club on the Fifth Avenue with the object of playing in the afternoon. I walked into Fifth Avenue from a cross street, and my first glimpse of it is one that will not soon be forgotten. It was a glorious morning, the sun shining hot and white, and New York, for the only time in its hustling week, was comparatively quiet. There was no traffic and few people just then in the Fifth Avenue, quite one of the most majestic and wonderful thoroughfares in the world despite its plain simplicity. But it was not the whiteness, not the glittering cleanliness, not the real splendour of this Fifth Avenue with all its newness, that struck the first impression on my mind. Upon the moment that this wandering British player of the most meditative of games emerged from somewhere round about West 36th or 37th, into the big avenue, there whizzed along it, right in front, a motor funeral which was doing a fine fifty miles an hour clip along the smooth and open thoroughfare. There was just the hearse with glass panels, the coffin plainly exhibited inside, and the chauffeur on the seat, with another man beside him who might have been a mourner. Holding life a little more cheaply in America than we do, they grieve a little less for those who lose it, which is not to say that they are heartless or unsympathetic, but more practical. This funeral, done with petrol instead of horses, was positively going north at the rate of fifty miles an hour. It was moving just as fast as I saw any car ever go in the United States, and I could not help reflecting that the spirit of the good American, viewing the last journey of its separated corpus, must feel a certain satisfaction that it was hustlingly done and that[[Pg 155](#)] no time was wasted. *Finis coronat opus!* Inspired, I played on two different courses in New York on the same afternoon.

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English people hear much about railroad travelling being far better in the United States than it is in our own country. It is—and it is not. The comfort and conveniences of the cars in the daytime are much in advance of anything we have. The men's smoking cars, the observation cars, the parlour cars, are delightful and enable us thoroughly to enjoy the journeys. Although they standardise so many things in America, they cease their standardisations when considerations of personal comfort and peculiarities have to be considered. It never occurred to me until I travelled my first thousand miles in America that it is a hardship that, no matter what our girth may be, nor the length of our bodies and legs, we must all of us at home, though we pay for our first-class accommodation, sit in standardised seats which are all the same and attached to each other. In the American railroad car running on a long-distance journey there are seats of different sorts, some are high and some are low, and they are detached. This makes much difference. In the dining-cars the tables and chairs are all loose, and one does not have to squeeze into them with the feeling that one is being locked into one's place as we do in England. And the dining arrangements on the American cars are far superior to what they are elsewhere. But if the American system gains by day the British system makes up for much of the lost comfort at night, and that is when the American, golfer and non-golfer, does most of his long-distance travelling. The Pullman day cars are

converted into sleepers by the dark-skinned attendants (uncommonly good railroad car servants[Pg 156] these niggers make), and by an almost magical transformation the lounging car is made into a sleeper with about two dozen berths, a dozen on each side, half uppers and half lowers, and an alley down the middle. The chief difference between the upper berths and the lower is that the uppers have to be reached by a short stepladder and are not convenient to fat, gouty, or unathletic persons, while those who wake early and like to look upon the prairie, or what once was that, have a window at the bottom as the people in the top have not. The berths are covered in with thick green curtains which button together. We may leave our boots outside for the attendant to brush in the morning, but our other clothes and traps must go along to bed with us, and be stowed away at the bottom of the berth, or in the little netting that hangs alongside. And here I must timidly state in evidence that there are not separate cars for the sexes; in America all go together, and the ladies and the men occupy the same cars. The ladies generally go off to bed earlier than the men. Whether they do or not, we all climb into our respective berths, fasten up the curtains, and undress in the very limited space at our disposal, a process which seems to me must be the same as that by which acrobatic performers wriggle themselves out of chains and ropes with which their limbs and bodies have been tied up fast. After a time we become expert. What is most difficult to become accustomed to is the horrible jolting, and the painfully sudden stopping of the trains in the middle of the night. Their permanent ways are not laid so finely as the magnificent lines along our coasts from London to Scotland. Their rails are not fixed in chairs laid on the sleepers, but are pinned down straight on to the wood. This makes much difference. The cars shake exceedingly. Then the drivers at night have to be[Pg 157] wary and stop quickly at times, and no doubt they do right not to reduce their speed gradually for the sake of the men and women who are asleep behind them, but instead to stop with a suddenness that could only be improved upon by a collision. However, I say again, that we find ourselves accustomed to it all in time.

I shall not forget my first experience of a thousand-mile golfing journey from the New York Central Station to Chicago. A few golfers were in a party going westward for the championship at Wheaton in Illinois, and we discussed the game from the time of starting in the late afternoon until we had passed Albany, about ten, when we moved into our sleeping quarters. My bag of clubs had to go to bed with me, and they lay alongside all the night; there was no room for them underneath. I had to sleep with one hand on the bag to prevent them from attacking me or going overboard into the avenue, so much did that wretched train rattle and shake as it hurtled its way through the darkness, with the big bell in the front of the engine jangling mournfully all the time. And what a wild, sad note it is that is struck by the bells on these American engines, suggestive of the loneliness of the open country through which they speed, now and then making a big noise with a sort of foghorn. I am much attached to my clubs, and they are the chosen favourites of a vast number that go with their master everywhere, and are carefully watched and tended, but the intimacy that was sprung upon us then was too much, and I invented another arrangement for the next travelling night. James Braid, very wise man indeed, tells me that long, deep nights of placid slumber are the best things in the world for the golfer who would keep steady his hands and nerves and clear his eyes so that he may play the best game of which he is capable. But no British golfer could sleep at the beginning of his American experiences in such[Pg 158] circumstances. I was just falling into some sort of a doze in the small hours of the morning when the train pulled up sharply at a station which I discovered to be Schenectady, where the famous putter that disturbed the peace of two nations was born. Next, one realised that we were within a mile or two of the Niagara Falls, and so on with jolting and banging and sudden stopping all the night. By and by daylight came and then we had a long day of travelling through the heart of America to Chicago.

Some may suggest that all this about railroad travelling in the country where there is more of it than any other has little to do with golf, but it has all to do with it, for the thorough golfer in America, whether a citizen or British, must needs spend a large part of his time in the train, and if he would have the maximum amount of golf, much sleeping must be done behind the green curtains in the darkened cars. The travelling done by the American golfer, therefore, is a surprising thing, but a few months of it is a fine and valuable experience for the British golfer afterwards. No longer, since I have been across the Atlantic, do I consider it a far way from London to the links of Dornoch. St. Andrews and North Berwick have come pleasingly near to me. All the world has shrunk, and I feel I have my foot on every course—or soon may have.

Though it be a thousand miles from New York to Chicago, and these are the two great golfing centres of the east and west, it is a fact, as I know well, that the golfers in the two places visit each other for a weekend's golf almost as frequently and with as little fuss as would be the case with golfers in London who go down to Sandwich. They take the "Twentieth Century Limited" from New York on Friday afternoon, and on Saturday morning they are at Chicago. They flash out on a local train to Onwentsia, Midlothian, Glen[Pg 159] View, Wheaton, Exmoor, or one of those places, play all day, start play again at eight o'clock on Sunday, finish their couple of rounds early in the afternoon, catch the fast train back to New York, and are at their office on Monday morning as if they had spent the week-end pottering about the garden. I am not concerned with the question as to

whether they are prolonging their lives by these acts; nor are they concerned. In the meantime they appear to be in the best of health, and are certainly in the highest of spirits.

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With this talk of journeys we seem in fancy to be in Chicago now, so let us consider the leading club of the busy district in the heart of America. The course of the Chicago club is at Wheaton, some twenty-five miles out on the North Western line, and this is the foremost club of the Central States, and west in the sense of being west of the east, for all golfing America is divided into two parts, the east and the west, Chicago being the capital of and held chiefly to represent the west, which holds some close rivalry with the east, where New York is headquarters. The west out California way is just the far and other west, and is in another world. The Chicago club is exclusive and dignified. The most solid men in the city support it, and they see that everything is good. It is not an ancient institution, but it has some of the characteristics of solidity and strength of age and sound experience. Chicago is not an old city, but, as the proud citizens like to tell you, about a hundred years ago there was no Chicago at all, but just a few wigwams of Indians and some huts and things round about a creek. Since then the place has been once burnt down, and yet it is now the fourth largest city of the world, while in its tenseness of [Pg 160] commercial industry it is the foremost of all. If all the ages past in Chicago only amount to a hundred years, then one-fifth of all time as known to Chicago history, which represents the life of the Chicago Golf Club, is comparatively long indeed.

In 1892 a small golf club was started for the first time round about Lake Forest, but the promoters had only about sixteen acres of ground. In the following year, when the World's Fair was held, a number of foreign visitors were in Chicago and asked for golf, as travellers will do, though the great golf boom had not yet then set in. Mr. Charles B. Macdonald came in with the movement, ground was searched for, and the Chicago Golf Club was organised at Belmont, some twenty-two miles out of the city. When the Fair was over in the following spring, only about twenty members were left to the club, and the outlook did not seem splendid. But once begun, in either place or man, golf is a very hard thing to kill. The twenty die-hards asked their friends to come and see the place and try the game. They did so, and those men of Chicago knew at once that they had discovered the real thing. A hundred and thirty members were quickly obtained. The inevitable result followed. They wanted more and better golf, and they wanted it to belong to them and not to be on leased ground, so in 1894 the club met and authorised the purchase of two hundred acres at Wheaton, twenty-four miles out from the city, a fine course was laid out, a splendid club-house was built, and a really great club was established. Here and now we may gain a very fair idea of the difference in cost to the player between American golf and British. No better club could be selected for the purpose of exemplification than this one. It so happened that a few days before I arrived there, its club-house was burnt down, with all its contents and appurtenances, and from the wreck [Pg 161] only a single one of the club-books of rules and regulations was rescued. I took possession of it while I made some notes upon the terrace of the only part of the building that was saved.

The first paragraph in the book, being Section 1 of Article 1 of the bye-laws, states that "this club is incorporated under the laws of Illinois as Chicago Golf Club, and its corporate seal is a circular disc bearing the words, 'Chicago Golf Club,' the figure of a golf player, and the motto, 'Far and Sure.'" To become a member of the club the applicant must be over eighteen years of age; he must have not more than one adverse vote cast against him by the governing body; and he must pay an entrance fee of not less than a hundred dollars or £20. The resident (or full) membership of the club is limited to 225, and the annual subscription is 75 dollars or £15, half of which is payable at the beginning of the year and half at midsummer. Now this subscription is much higher than that of any golf club in Great Britain, and the fact is only partly attributable to the circumstance that everything in America is more expensive than it is in England. The higher subscription is necessitated because the membership is kept down so low as 225, and that is done in order that there may be no overcrowding of the course. In England such a club, being situated within thirty miles of a great city and having the best course round about, would probably admit at least five or six hundred members, with the result that on the fine and busy week-end days the course would be hopelessly blocked and there would be no pleasure for anybody. This is certainly so in the case of two or three of the most popular clubs in the outer London golfing area, and one may come to a speedy decision that in this matter the American way is by far the better. Ladies who are over sixteen years of age and the immediate [Pg 162] relatives of a member are permitted to have the privileges of the course, subject to the rules of the Green Committee, on payment of ten dollars a year. There is another class, "summer members," who are not to exceed fifteen in number, and who pay 150 dollars for one summer season's play. There is practically no play in the winter, the climatic conditions being too severe. The other rules as to membership are much the same as those which obtain in the case of British golf clubs.

Among the "house rules," it is stated that the club-house generally will remain open until midnight, and the café, which is the British equivalent of the smoke-room with bar, until one o'clock in the morning, which is a lateness of hour almost unheard of in England, but then it has to be remembered that such club-houses in America are mostly residential. "Juniors" are not allowed in the café. The warning is given that smoking and the lighting of matches in the locker or dressing room are absolutely prohibited, and that a fine of ten dollars will be imposed on any member violating this rule. Fires in club-houses in America being so numerous is the cause of this rule, which is rigorously applied. Then it is perceived that no member makes any payment whatsoever in cash in the club-house. He signs a check or bill, an account of his expenditure is kept, and it is served to him fortnightly. Payment must then be made within ten days, failing which the member is suspended. Some interesting items are to be found among the ground rules. One says that in medal play competitions new holes must be assumed to have been made on the morning of a competition, unless otherwise stated by the Green Committee; and another that a member playing a round, and keeping score other than in club competition must allow parties playing pure match-play[Pg 163] to pass. The Americans are not content with merely requesting a player to replace the divots of turf that he cuts up in play. They say: "Divots of turf cut up by players must be carefully replaced and pressed down. A fine of one dollar will be imposed on any member violating this rule. All members are earnestly requested to report any member who violates this rule to the Green Committee." Caddies are paid "from the time of their employment until the time they are discharged, to be determined by an electric clock, at such rate per hour as may be determined by the Green Committee." There is nothing that is inexpensive about a club of this class, and let it be understood that there are few second-class golf clubs in the States where the fees are small. A day's golf at a good club is cheap indeed at five dollars. When one goes to stay there for a night or two one finds that the statutory price for breakfast is a dollar, for lunch 1.25, and for dinner 1.30 upwards. When I returned to England it appeared that golf and all pertaining to it was cheap, almost to the gift point.

The course at Wheaton is good, although there are some in America that are better. It is plain, its holes sometimes lack strength, but it is well tended and its putting greens are quite perfect. Its fairway is not perfect, any more than the fairways of other American courses are. The climate will hardly permit of their being so. It bakes them up and makes them hard, and the inevitable result is little knobs and depressions which give cuppy lies, and turf which for all its greenness is not by any means comfortable to the feet in comparison with the yieldingness of our British turf. The Americans cannot help this; if it were practicable to treat every inch of their turf for climatic troubles all through the day and night they would perhaps do it. It is practicable to treat their putting greens thoroughly, and the result is that, taking them all round, they have[Pg 164] undoubtedly got the best putting greens in the world. I mean, without reservation, that the average of the best courses in America is higher than the average of the best in our own country, and I say it with some regret that they have a score of courses in the United States with greens far superior to those on the old course at St. Andrews the last time the Amateur Championship was played there, those greens being then not what they used to be. I think much of the credit for the high quality of the greens at Wheaton is due to the splendid work of David Foulis, the professional and greenkeeper there. Need I say that David is a Scot, and a very true Scot too, who still loves his old homeland better than any other, and is glad when the wandering golfer from it gets his way. Chicago may seem a strange place to visit for facts of old golf history, and yet here I added some details to the histories of the people and their golfing ways of fifty years and more ago, for Foulis has his father living with him out in Illinois, and Foulis the elder was at work with old Tom Morris in the great days when the Open Championship was young, and stirring are the stories that he can tell you, as he did to me in David's shop, of old Tom and Allan Robertson, and the other giants of those times, carrying one in mind and spirit far away from the land round about the big lake of Michigan to the old grey city which was old more than a hundred years ago.

I took away with me as a memento from David Foulis a club that he has invented, and which for a special purpose I can commend. It is a kind of mashie niblick, David claiming to be the inventor of this type of club, but it is different from others in that it has a perfectly straight, flat sole and a concave face. I, like others, found that by the use of this club I saved some dollars, for it enabled me to pitch the ball from a hard lie on to the hard greens and make it stay[Pg 165] close to the hole when nothing else would serve the purpose. The ordinary mashie niblick with curved sole is not perfect for baked and iron-hard courses, as it is not easy to get well hold of the ball when taking it cleanly as must often be done in such circumstances, and the margin for error is painfully small. The flat-soled club is essentially one for taking the ball cleanly, and somehow that hollow face does impart extra backspin to the ball. It lifts it up and drops it dead as no other club that I have handled will of itself ever do.

But let me write that the Americans are not given to fancy and freak clubs as some people suppose they are. There is nothing freakish about this article of which I write, and for the most part the implements that the American players employ are the simplest. And just to complete my generalising remarks on American courses, which naturally vary greatly, let me say that commonly they are not so severely bunkered as are the best of ours, particularly from the tee. They do not demand either such long or such straight driving as our best courses do,

and I think that the Americans realise now that this is the case and that they need stiffening up. They are doing that already. There are some very good holes at Wheaton, and the short hole at the ninth is about the most tantalising water hole I have encountered. It is all water from the teeing ground to the foot of a high plateau on which the green is situated, and it is about a hundred and ten yards across the pond.

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[Pg 166]

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PERFECT COUNTRY CLUB AND THE GOLFERS' POW-WOW AT ONWENTSIA, WITH A GLIMPSE OF THE NATIONAL LINKS.

Round Chicago there is now a great belt of golf which is thickening rapidly. More hundreds of acres are being claimed for the game constantly, and one hears in these parts of the most splendidly equipped club-houses being built to replace others at the cost of very many thousands of dollars. Activity in the increase of golf is feverish. But even here maturity has its charm, as it always must have in golf, and the most delightful resorts in Illinois are those which are the oldest. Such as Onwentsia, Exmoor, Midlothian, Glen View are excellent.

I am glad I went to Onwentsia. Most British golfers who have never been and will never go across the Atlantic have heard something, even if but the name, of the Onwentsia club. It seems to suggest American golf, and there is a look of some mystery about the name. Onwentsia is by no means like the others, and there are good reasons why. Here on a wall of mine are two feathers of eagles fastened crosswise; below them an Indian's pipe of peace with its silken tassel. They were sent to me across the sea from Onwentsia by some members a while after I had been there, and they are a reminder not only of happy days but of the characteristics of Onwentsia, for the name of the place is an Indian one. Here were [Pg 167] the redskins before all others, and then the white men and golfers came, and still it is almost as if the soil were redolent of the Indian trail. The club perpetuates in a manner considered suitable the memory and legend of the braves; my eagles' feathers are such as a "Running Driver" or "Mighty Mashie" might have worn in their fighting days, and they adorned our modern Onwentsians on the day of their Indian feast! Let me explain. Lake Forest, where is Onwentsia, is a very charming suburb of Chicago, at the side of Lake Michigan. Its name suggests its character; it is well wooded, and one of the kind friends that I made there, Mr. Slason Thompson, drove me in his car in the dusk of a balmy evening for miles through the beautiful public grounds. The Onwentsia Club, as it is called, is a close fraternity of the best people of these parts. It is a country club in a large sense. It is a hunt club, it is a polo club with a splendid ground, it is a tennis club, and it is a golf club, and it need hardly be said that the golf is a very strong feature, the predominator of the institutions. Now the Onwentsian golfers, zealous and good, have their own manners and customs, and, particularly they have one custom which has a fame all over America, and it has spread even beyond the seas. If it be not sin to mention them together Onwentsia has one great day of celebration as the Royal and Ancient Club has one. Towards the end of September the Royal and Ancient Club calls its members together for the autumn gathering at St. Andrews, and there on that occasion, as has been related, many ancient and solemn ceremonies of great dignity are performed. The captain "plays himself in," guns are fired, in the evening at the banquet new members kiss the silver club and swear their loyalty, and much more in that splendid and time-honoured way is done. America is true to St. Andrews golf in its law, but Lake Forest, [Pg 168] far out toward the west, is not the same as Fifeshire, and the Onwentsia Club at Lake Forest is not like the Royal and Ancient. It is not a question of which is the better; they are different, and when I was in Illinois, at any rate, Onwentsia was to me a very entertaining place. And I do not say this merely because Onwentsia, near to Lake Michigan, is so charmingly situated; because the club is such a delightful place, perfect in equipment, with a luxurious club-house, and inside it a huge swimming pool and many shower-baths, making one sometimes a trifle regretful upon the bareness of our British golfing-houses. It is just because when I first reached there the great golfing gathering at St. Andrews was nearly due and the golfers at Onwentsia were having theirs. When I dined with Mr. Thompson that evening at his charming house overlooking the great lake, and we smoked cigars on the lawn overhanging it, he told me why on everything that concerned the club there was the same sign, the head of an Indian brave with the big feather in it, and why they were just going forward to the great annual pow-wow. If you would do it properly you should pronounce Onwentsia in the soft, crooning Indian way. Murmur it slowly and gently, and mount the cadence high upon the second syllable; then, after a suspicion of a pause, lower the notes gradually to

the end. If you said it in the right way an old Iroquois brave would know that you were referring to "a country gathering," for that is the meaning of the term. In days of old the Iroquois trailed over all these parts where now the course is laid. Here were their wigwams; here lingered their squaws with the little papoose, while the red men hunted and fought. That is why the golfers of Onwentsia have their pow-wow once a year.

The pow-wow is an invitation golf tournament lasting two days, and it is open only to those members[Pg 169] who are of a certain age or over (it was thirty-nine when I was there) and their guests, one guest per member. In order to preserve complete the familiar friendliness of the gathering and to maintain its traditions undisturbed by new influences, the age limit is increased from year to year to keep the new and young men out. The call to the pow-wow, which is written anew for every festival, gives us the key to the nature of the function, and I quote from one of them:

On the banks of Skokie water,  
By the water flecked with golf balls,  
Stands the wigwam, the Onwentsia,  
The great wigwam of the Pow-wow.  
Come ye forth, ye Jol-li-gol-fas,  
Come ye forth and come ye quickly  
To Onwentsia, the big wigwam,  
To Onwentsia, the big Pow-wow,  
In the Moon of Falling Leaflets,  
Ere the trees are red with autumn,  
Come in trains, the Puf-choo-choo-puf;  
Come in motors, Aw-to-bub-buls;  
In the 'bus, old Shuh-too-get-thah,  
To Onwentsia, to the Pow-wow.  
Here's the bartend, Wil-lin-mix-ah,  
The head waitress, Goo-too-loo-kat,  
The great golfer, Hoo-beets-boh-ghee,  
And the caddy, Skip-an-fetch-it,  
Waiting all to do you honour.  
Leave your war club, Tom-ah-haw-kus,  
Bring the peace sticks, Dri-vah-nib-lix;  
Leave your toilsome reservations  
And the dust of smoky cities  
For the Pow-wow in the wigwam;  
Bring the peace pipe, Swee-too-suk-kat,  
Taste the bowl, Hi-baw-laf-tah;  
Play the game, Roy-al-skoch-wun,  
All the morning in the sunlight,  
All the afternoon, till evening  
Spreads the feast of squab and chicken  
'Mid the joy of good companions  
Gathered in the spreading wigwam  
Of Onwentsia for the Pow-wow.  
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Lasting for two days, with one great night in between them, it happens that the first session of play is conducted in a state of high anticipation and with much joyful shaking of hands and exhibitions of brotherly attachment, and the second session with a feeling as of a slowly receding past. Only those who attend the feast in the big wigwam are eligible to play in the numerous competitions to which are attached such an abundance of prizes that it is difficult for the golfing brave to go empty-handed back to his gentle squaw. A law indeed has had to be made that he shall not take more than two of the trophies away with him.

At eight o'clock on the morning of the first day the play begins. There is a thirty-six holes medal competition for the Sum-go-fah trophy (the "Indian" titles are changed from year to year), and at the end of eighteen holes the numerous competitors are grouped into sections of eight, according to the place in the returns—first eight, second eight, and so on for separate match-play competitions for the Sko-ki-ko-lah prizes. The prize for the first eight is the Mis-sa-sko-kih, for the second the O-ma-go-li, for the third the Hit-ta-sko-kih, for the fourth the Sti-mi-gosh, for the fifth the Bum-put-tah, for the sixth the Went-an-mis-tit, for the seventh the Top-an-sli-sah, for the eighth the Let-mih-tel-you, and for the ninth the Dub-an-duf-fah. Then there is a competition for the Bun-

kah-bun-kah prize, which is embraced within the Sum-go-fah, being for the best eclectic score made in the two rounds, or "choice score" as they prefer to call it in the States. Two-thirds handicap is allowed. Likewise there is the Noh-bak-num-bah prize, which is by medal play with an age handicap, the handicap being determined by the years of the contestant above or below forty. By such play, whether it is successful or not, do the braves qualify for the feast, and at half-past seven there is the [Pg 171] call to the big and happy wigwam. The great dining-room is indeed made by fitting and decoration to appear as one great wigwam, and there are some of the adjuncts of the life of the old Iroquois. The golfing braves stride eagerly, joyfully, chatteringly in. Reddened are the golfers' faces; wrapped around them are their blankets, from their hair stick big black feathers; long pipes of peace are held before them. Then there are strange but toothsome dishes; they taste the "Hi-baw-laf-ta-tah"; happiness and contentment increase; there are toasts and shouts and whoops. The successors of the Iroquois hold their pow-wow well. At the beginning of the morning, when the moon is riding through the fleecy heavens of Illinois, softly they steal away, and in the distance now and then there may be heard the same lone cry that once resounded through the forest when Iroquois were on the trail. But at nine in the morning more competitions begin, and are most thoroughly attended. There are tournaments for the Bus-tis-tik-sah, the Boo-li-bus-tah, the Strok-a-hol-ah, the Heez-noh-mut-sah, the Ho-pu-get-it, the Get-sa-loo-kin, the He-za-pee-chah, the Wil-lin-loo-sah, the Oh-you-papoose, and other cups. Some of the prizes go to the players doing certain holes in the lowest gross score during the tournament, the Wil-lin-loo-sah is captured by the man who does the four rounds worst of all on the two days, and an Onwentsia medicine pouch, the nature of which may be guessed by golfers with little difficulty, remembering British practice, is awarded to the brave who does a particular hole in one stroke. It is all very remarkable, wonderful, interesting, and thoroughly American, and not the ragged corner of a paper dollar the worse for it either. Happy Onwentsia! [Pg 172]

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At the Glen View Country Club they have a special autumn festival also which has a character of its own. The motto of Glen View is "Laigh and lang"—low and long—which is a good variation on the monotonous "far and sure." And about Glen View there is a Scottish flavour; in manners and customs for a very brief season in the golden days of the fall there is wafted from the far distant Highlands a breath of Scotland. Here they call their festival the "Twa Days," and it is carried through with a fine spirit. There are competitions in number and kind to satisfy everybody, and the social side of the affair is excellent.

Glen View, again, is not like the others either. I spent some days there as the guest of the club, and nowhere have I had a more pleasurable time. It came after an exceedingly strenuous, rushing period at other places, and towards the end of one of the hottest spells of weather that they had known for many summers in those burning parts. Glen View is a pretty name, but it is not prettier than the golf course there, which is one of the most charming I know. It reminded one in some ways of Sudbrook Park in the early summer, always, as I think, one of the most delightful inland courses in the south of England; but Glen View, with its sleepy streams, is nicer. It may not be up to "championship standard" in its architectural features, but it might be made so. Yet if such a change would remove much of the character of Glen View, I, in my selfishness, knowing that on some future morning I shall again take the 9.35 from Chicago on the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad, and alight at the station which is called "Golf," hope for my high pleasure that there will [Pg 173] be none such made. When a club once becomes infatuated with the championship idea its contentment and happiness depart, and Glen View is best as it is. The holes have character. The greens are placed in the most beautiful nooks and corners, great belts of trees surround the course, and a stream winds snake-like through the grounds. At about every third hole there is a large barrel which is filled every morning with fresh spring water, into which a large block of ice is placed. When you play in a shade temperature of nearly a hundred degrees, as I have done at this place, you appreciate these barrels. They have a natty way of naming their holes at Glen View. The first is called "The Elm," the second "High Ball," the third "Sleepy Hollow," and the next in order are "Polo," "Lover's Lane," "Old Hickory," "The Round Up," "Trouble," "Reservoir," "Westward Ho!" "The Grove," "Sunset," "The Bridge," "The Roost," "Spookey," "The Orchard," "Log Cabin," and "Sweet Home." The course is 6279 yards long, and every one of these yards is a pleasure to play along. Visitors do like this place. In one year recently there were 3550 of them who paid a dollar a day for the privilege of playing. The members of the club pay one hundred dollars a year subscription, and nowadays it costs about five hundred dollars for admission. Every member must be the possessor of a hundred-dollar share in the club, and these shares are now at a premium of about five times their par value. At few other places in the golfing world is there such a nicely appointed club-house as there is here. One could put two or three of the largest dining-rooms that our golf clubs possess into the one of Glen View, and the furnishing is finely and tastefully done in a Flemish style. Some of the golfing prints with which we are most familiar hang upon the walls. Other pictures of [Pg 174] value keep them company, and there is a large crayon drawing done on the spot by my old friend, the late Tom Browne, who once came here with his bag of clubs.



The café at the Glen View club is an interesting institution. The club has one of the cleverest cocktail mixers in America, and the printed list of available liquid refreshments that is laid upon the tables suggests a little consideration. The American golfers, for the most part, do not drink very much, and what they do drink has little effect upon them, thanks to the heat and much perspiration; but they do like novelties and the variety. So on this list—which, mind you, includes no wines, which are quoted on a separate sheet—there are scheduled no fewer than 147 different kinds of refreshments. There are thirteen "soft drinks," eight different lemonade mixtures, eleven sorts of mineral waters, thirteen beers and ales, six rye whiskies, seven Bourbon whiskies, eleven Scotch and Irish whiskies, thirteen varieties of cocktails, two "toddlies," three "sours," three "rickies," three "cobblers," six "fizzes," two "flips," seven "punches," three "smashes," and thirty-six "miscellaneous." The last is a most interesting section. It includes the "Prairie Oyster," the "Millionaire," the "Pousse l'Amour," the "Sam Ward," the "Russian Cooler," the "Japanese Cooler," the "Golfer's Delight," the "Angel's Dream," the "Ladies' Puff," and the "Glen View High Ball." Nearly all of these cost twenty or twenty-five cents each.

One may be most pleasurably lazy at Glen View. The club-house has some forty bedrooms, with a fine equipment of shower and other baths, and the usual telephone service to all the bedrooms with a complete telephone exchange downstairs. The service and comfort are as good as they can be. I liked the lounges and the shady verandahs, with rocking-chairs[Pg 175] to tip one away to a short dream on a hot afternoon of purling brooks on English hills and woods in Wales. Yet when I awake I am satisfied. There is no hurry here. In the mornings one would hear the men rising at six o'clock and splashing themselves about in the bath department, and generally becoming very active all at once. Some time later I would join them at breakfast, and see them depart very early for their businesses at Chicago. When they had gone one could settle down, and there were ladies to chatter with or to play Chopin or something else on the piano. It is necessary to take things a little easily during the early and hot part of the day, because soon in the afternoon the men come back from Chicago, and they are all energy and rush as if they had not spent a howling morning in the "Pit" or one of the other great business centres. One has to fall in with their schemes of activity, which endure until the evening meal, taken in an easy way of *en famille* in the restaurant of the club, luscious green corn to begin with and the most appetising dishes later, with laughter and gossip always. And later in the evening David Noyes and I might sit in the dark on the verandah, and under those stars of Illinois speak of the differences between English people and the Americans as we respectively saw them. We understood each other and could be frank. "The worst of America," said I, "is that it has no soul, and the Americans have none either." "Well," said he; "but we have big hearts." Agreed. He is a leading broker in the "Pit" at Chicago, the great wheat market of the world, and one morning he took me there and I met many golfers I knew round about those four screeching masses of men who make of this place a babel and such an exhibition of raw fighting human nature as, with all its differences, I can only compare with the same brilliant and yet ugly show[Pg 176] that is made in the rooms of the Casino at Monte Carlo. It is raw life on the strain at both places—hot seething life. The reposeful Glen View is needed for the people who barter there.

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Massachusetts is a fine golfing land, and it rose to the heights in 1913. After gaiety in New York, and amazement at Chicago, you should go to Boston. And really they who live there have reason for their pride. There is no other town or city in the United States or Canada that has anything like such an English flavour as this in the New England. There are times when we wander along the great thoroughfare, Washington Street, or turn up one of the side avenues like Boylston, that the American idea for a moment ceases to press closely upon us, and when we pass the old churches, wander through historic chambers Georgian in their style, look into the Faneuil Hall, or into the old-fashioned market, or go down to the shipping in the docks where our Boston man will surely take us, that we may see the place of the "tea party," as they call it now, which had vast consequences to the States and England when taxes were made and were rejected—then in the New England we feel the old one there. And, of course, the wandering Englishman is taken out to Bunker Hill as well. Though with all Americans their spirit of independence is an obsession, and it seems sometimes that they like to think of themselves as a new race of people come up out of nothing or from heaven, owing nothing to any other race, yet at Boston I suspect they are a trifle glad that they and their city are not like the others, but are something more English in their way. There is a difference in the atmosphere. A certain ease is possible, a culture is[Pg 177] apparent. Streets and shops do not look as if they had been cut out by machinery at the same time that the streets and shops of a dozen other cities were being cut, and all life is not mathematically arranged and standardised. If an American university is not at all like either Oxford or Cambridge, still Harvard is an influence, and Harvard is at Cambridge, a near suburb of Boston. The result of it all is that we feel something of the old atmosphere of home and are stimulated. Boston grows upon us very rapidly. The father of one of my good American friends, Mr. John G. Anderson, who has gone on golfing expeditions with me in England, Scotland, France and the United States, is a Scot with a great love for his home country, and our rambles round old Boston have been of a

peculiarly interesting kind. And when in Boston, and the car of a friend comes along to the Touraine in the morning, we throw the clubs in the back of it, and get up with just that feeling of having a sporting day ahead that one develops in the country at home and hardly anywhere else.

There are many courses round about Boston, and there are four of them, all quite different from each other, of which I shall have a clear recollection always. Two have very special places of their own in American golf, one being The Country Club of Brookline already described. Massachusetts itself will not be called a "state" like other states, but is a "commonwealth," and The Country Club is not the Boston Country Club or the Brookline Country Club, but The Country Club, and visitors who would be appreciative and make no *faux pas* are recommended to keep the point in mind, the reason being that this one, with its charter of incorporation away back in the eighteenth century, was the first of all the country clubs in America, and is dignified accordingly.

They do blow the place up in America when[Pg 178] they determine to make a golf course. Forest and rock are of no more hindrance to any idea or scheme than a few daisies might be. I was strongly impressed with this view of things when I was out one day at the Essex County Club at Manchester-by-the-Sea, another of the outer-Boston courses. "Come to golf at Essex in the morning; you will see something of the way in which we do our golf in America that you have never seen before." Such was the substance of an invitation from Mr. George F. Willett, one of the most ardent and admirable leaders of the golfing movement in the Eastern States. So in the morning golf at Essex, twenty miles out of Boston, was the programme of the day, and by half-past ten we were on the first tee preparing to drive from an eminence down towards low land in front. The terms of the invitation were amply justified. Towards noon, when we might be somewhere about the thirteenth or fourteenth hole, a great roar and crashing sound came from the other side of the course in the locality of the fifth hole, and looking towards it there was to be seen a rising cloud of smoke, with masses of earth and splintered rocks being hurled high into the air. A moment later and there was another deafening bang and more earth, more rocks, and various stumps of trees were shot up towards the sky. Bang! bang! bang!—ten times in the space of a few seconds was this surprise repeated, and it began to seem that we must be on Olympian links and that Jove himself or Hercules was bunkered. "It's only Ross's men tinkering away at the new fourth," said my man unconcernedly, as he ran down a long putt. A couple of minutes afterwards we rounded a bend of the course, and as we did so some wild yells were heard and a number of the Italian workmen were seen running fast in our direction and then stopping suddenly to hide themselves behind trees. Three more big bangs, more smoke, flying earth, flying rocks and[Pg 179] roots, and then as my partner played his brassey he soliloquised that he had added, unintentionally, a touch of slice to the stroke and was in the pot on the right. As to the noises, our part of the course, I was assured, was perfectly safe. The three explosions were made by Ross's Italians at the new fifth. Thirteen of them in five minutes was perhaps a little unusual, but they were all over now, and, as could be seen, the Italians, with sundry calls to each other, were moving back towards the place they had sprinted from. The object of this concentration of noise and disturbance in five minutes, it was explained, was to give the full body of workmen plenty to do as soon as they resumed after their midday meal.

The truth is, that golf at Essex, when I was first there, was undergoing a great and most wonderful transformation, regardless of cost, regardless of the magnitude and seeming impossibilities of the task, regardless of everything, but caused by the insatiable desire of the American golfer to have courses that are as good as they can be. To satisfy this desire he is everywhere pulling Nature to pieces and reconstructing her, doing his work deftly and skilfully, and with a good eye for pleasing effect. At the finish you might think that, save for the putting greens and bunkers, it was all the simple work of the mother of earth herself in her gentler moods, smooth swards for rocks, and chaste glades where forests were. This transformation and extension of American golf and the way it is being done is most amazing. All the old courses are being lengthened and greatly improved, and new ones of first-class quality are being made in large numbers. When it is desired to make changes and extensions on a British course the work that has to be done is not generally of a very formidable character. Some tolerably smooth sort of land is frequently available, and alternatives to[Pg 180] existing holes may be planned. But even so, the question of expense seems often to be a fearsome thing, and a year or more of thought and yet another year for action are commonly needed. A thousand pounds or two thousand seems to be a mighty sum to spend, but for all that we think that in the south, at all events, we are doing our golf on a very grand scale in these days. And when I think of St. George's Hill and Coombe Hill and others of their kind I know we are doing it on a very fine scale. But the case of America at present is most specially remarkable. In the Eastern States particularly, the courses have had for the most part to be carved out of virgin forests. Tens of thousands of tons of rocks have had to be blasted, and hundreds of acres of swamps drained before the fairways could be laid and sown with grass. Such work is having to be done now for the extensions and improvements, and it is wonderfully done. The committees appear to take about a week to think about it, a day to decide, and then in two or three months, with the help of dynamite, tree-fellers, and hundreds of foreign workmen, the new scheme is carried through. The cost is not considered till afterwards, and then it never worries, but it is enormous. Here at Essex, the chief work that was being done was the addition of a total

of 175 yards only to the fourth and fifth holes, which were to be given new numbers, and this little bit of lengthening, with the tree-felling, the splendid draining of a swamp, and the use of 400 lbs. of dynamite on the rocks, was costing 10,000 dollars or £2000. Some other alterations and new constructions were being done, and the course, one of fine undulations, well-planned bunkering, magnificent putting greens, and glorious scenery, was being brought to perfection. The work was being carried out under the direction of Mr. Donald J. Ross, the chief superintendent of the club and course, who was[Pg 181] once a Dornoch man. He thinks out his construction schemes in the grand way, and he is going about America blowing hundreds of acres of it up into the air and planting smooth courses upon the levelled remains. Shortly before this, they called him up to a mountainous place at Dixville Notch, in New Hampshire, to plan a new nine-holes course that had to be cut out of solid rock, at a cost of £10,000. No golfer had ever been to that place, and the first had yet to arrive when the promoters wrote hurriedly to Mr. Ross, not long back home, saying: "We are convinced that it will soon be necessary to have a longer course, and are very desirous that you will come at once to lay one out on Panorama Hill." It will cost £20,000, but that does not matter. Golf is demanded everywhere in America, and it must be supplied. A little extra space was required for play by the Rhode Island Country Club at Narragansett, so, with Ross's help they took forty acres from the sea, and are now playing the game where a year previously the waves were rolling. Again, this remarkable golf engineer a little while since finished his work on the very first course that has been laid out in Cuba. I do not know what the future of American golf will be, but its present is a bewildering, astonishing thing.

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"Yes, but wait until you see Myopia!" I was not glad to leave Essex, but I was happy to go from there to the Myopia Hunt Club a few miles distant (and may I never forget that glorious ride in Mr. Willett's big car, along the winding road fringed with silver birches and autumn-tinted foliage, past placid little lakes, through some of the country of chastest charm in New England!), for Myopia is America's golfing pride. Besides, it is one of the few American courses that have[Pg 182] a wide international reputation. Remember the astonishment when Andrew Kirkaldy, a St. Andrews golfer, if ever there was one, a man believing in the old course of Fifeshire as a Mussulman believes in Mecca, came back from an American tour and declared to British people that Myopia was the best course in the world! So we approach one American golf course with wonder and a certain awe. There are other reasons for doing so if we only knew them beforehand. Traditions and old dignity are strongly attached to it, and this Myopia is such a club for high feeling and exclusiveness as would do credit to any institution we have at home, golf or otherwise. It is, at the very least, as difficult to become a member of Myopia as of the Royal and Ancient. If I dared I would say it is more so. Myopia, I am told, will use the black ball with joy when there is a candidate at the doors. It might be easier in some circumstances for a man to become the President of the United States than to become a member of the Myopia Hunt Club. The dignity of Myopia exudes from the timbers of its long, quaint club-house. The ceilings are low, while the walls are panelled and are really old, for in quite early days of New England this, or part of it, was a farm-house.

The name of the club in this case has nothing to do with golf, nor with the name of a place, for the place is Hamilton. Myopia is a technical term for near-sight. The original members despised the game, and as for letting it influence them in their choice of name of the club, such a thing is inconceivable. Originally, and for long afterwards, and primarily even now, Myopia is a hunt club; it prides itself on being so, and when anybody asks one of the old hunting members if they do not possess a good golf course there, he might say he supposed they did play some game with that name there sometimes. In the early days, I believe[Pg 183] that many of the members wore coloured glasses for some reasons connected with their sight, and it was through this that the name of the club was given. Golf was a very late addition, and some of the old hunting-men, whom you will see moving about the club-house in real and unaffected riding costume as hardly anywhere else in America, feel a little sore about it still, and it is even now the fact that the hunting section keep to themselves in one part of the club and the golfers to themselves in their part, with such as Mr. Herbert Leeds and one or two others in both. Mr. Leeds showed me some of the old prints on the walls illustrating the race meetings that had taken place there in almost prehistoric times, and some mementoes of the early days of the golf club, together with the score card of George Duncan's record round on the course. I hope you realise that Myopia is not an ordinary golf club; I did so within a minute of my arrival there.

The course is not like others in America. It is almost more of the open heathland sort of course than any other I have tramped over while in the country. It is a little barer, seemingly a little wilder than most of the others, and none the worse for that. Its putting-greens are capital, and at some of the holes, if not all, I have certainly trodden on turf that is better than anything else that my feet have touched on that side of the Atlantic. I remember that I nearly shouted with delight to my partner when I came upon the first stretch of it—green and soft and velvety. But it was not all like that, and in some respects I do think that, splendid as the course is, praise of it has been a

little overdone. Yet on the other hand it is certainly a course that grows on the constant player there, and reveals new subtleties to him every time of playing. That after all is the test of a great course. Architecturally[Pg 184] many of the holes are splendid. I do not quite like the idea of the man having to drive uphill at the first hole, but the tee-shot has most decidedly to be placed—to the left—or the player has the most fearful approach that he might ever dream of after the most indigestible dinner. The fourth hole is a splendid one of the dog-leg kind, a drive and an iron with the green very well bunkered, and some very low land to the left which is a constant attraction to the weak-minded ball. Then for my own part I liked the tenth very much, for a big drive has to be done over some high ground with a bunker away to the right that draws hard at sliced balls, while the green is one of the nicest and most prettily guarded. I lingered about it for some time in an admiring way. The last hole also has infinitely more in it than appears at the first glance, for here again a big bunker jutting into the edge of the green and to the right is a strong factor, especially when the pin is behind it; and if the hero does not place his tee-shot to the left, and within a very little space there, too, he will be sorry. It is 6335 yards round the course. In the club-house over the tea-cups, on the occasion of my first visit, I pondered upon the marvellous excellence of Duncan's record round, and paid some most sincere compliments to Mr. Leeds for the quality of the golf architecture of Myopia, for it is he, after close study of the best British models, who has been chiefly responsible for it.

A day and night at the Brae Burn Country Club at West Newton, near Boston, left a warm glow lingering in my mind. Here if anywhere in America there is country charm and social delight. Nowhere is the idea of the complete and happy social community of the country club better developed. The course is a fine one, and here also, at the time of my first visit, extensive works were being carried out, and some splendid new[Pg 185] holes over heaving land were in the process of formation. They have since been completed and the course has now risen to the highest standard. The putting-greens are in the nicest and most beautiful places, belts of trees line the fairway at several of the holes; there are others in open country, and the short ones are uncommonly good. A new one that they were making then, calling for a drive from a height down to a pocket-handkerchief kind of green is one that I hope to be puzzled at in the play within a few weeks of the moment when I write. I had the happiness then to nominate the situation of a new bunker at one of the new holes, and sure I am that a momentary vexation will be the result when I play that hole, for I, too, in America, have found that I develop the American hook, which seems to be in the climate and the soil. It was on this course that Harry Vardon in his all-conquering tour in America in 1900 sustained his only defeat. Our dinner-party in the club-house in the evening is an unforgettable reminiscence. It was a good-fellowship golfing party such as this game only can bring about. Mr. Harry L. Ayer, Mr. E. A. Wilkie, Mr. George Gilbert, Mr. C. I. Travelli, good Anderson and self talked our golf, British and American, to the full extent of a good ability. One of the topics was club captaincy, and the discussion we had may lead to the creation of the office at Brae Burn and elsewhere, for it is a curious thing that the American clubs have never thought of creating captains, and this community was rather pleased with the idea. It is an office that a golf club needs. If the captain is the right man, if he is chosen for his past service, for his present strength, and for his tact and quality as man and golfer, he can do much for a club, and his appointment is a recognition that a club needs for its best and most faithful men.[Pg 186]

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The country round about New York abounds in interesting golfing places, and if inclination were followed there should be descriptions given of Nassau, of Apawamis (not forgetting the rock to the right of the first green there which an English ball most usefully struck when the thirty-seventh hole was being played in the final of the American championship, Mr. Fred Herreshoff, finalist, being loser thereby), of Garden City, Baltusrol, and many other good golfing places in these parts. Garden City is a name familiar to golfers in Britain, because it is the place where Mr. Walter J. Travis came from when he won the championship at Sandwich. If it lacks some of the boldness of feature of some of the later American courses, yet this is a fine testing course, thoroughly—and so deeply!—bunkered, and with splendid putting-greens, and all the place round about is very pleasant. And now I am very anxious to see Piping Rock, as I soon expect to do.

There are good reasons for making a journey by the Pennsylvania railroad from New York to Washington. One must pay the visitor's homage to the seat of American government and experience the feeling of being at the heart of the States, with its magnificent buildings and its historical remembrances. It is an intensely interesting place. At the White House there is Mr. President Wilson who is a golfer, as ex-President Taft was, and remains one of the keenest in the land. Mr. Taft will write enthusiastically about the game, and make speeches about it when he thinks it proper. "My advice to the middle-aged and older men who have never played golf," he says, "is to take it up. It will be a rest and recreation from business cares, out of which they will get an immense[Pg 187] amount of pleasure, and at the same time increase their physical vigour and capacity for work as well as improve their health." And he also says, "Preceding the election campaign in which I was successful, there were many of

my sympathisers and supporters who deprecated its becoming known that I was addicted to golf, as an evidence of aristocratic tendencies and a desire to play only a rich man's game. You know, and I know, that there is nothing more democratic than golf, and there is nothing which furnishes a greater test of character and self-restraint, nothing which puts one more on an equality with one's fellows—or, I may say, puts one lower than one's fellows—than the game of golf. If there is any game that will instil in one's heart a more intense feeling of self-abasement and humiliation than the game of golf, I should like to know what it is." One who was in office there told me something of his enthusiasm for the game. I asked him how often Mr. Taft had played when he was there in the golfing season. The answer was that Mr. Taft used to play every day, positively every day, and some of those who played with him indicated to me what a very thorough and determined golfer he was. It might be said of the ex-President that he has spent more time in bunkers than most citizens, because he has generally insisted on playing out, no matter how many strokes have been needed. He has been playing now for sixteen years, and is quite one of the oldest American golfers in point of service to the game. Nothing can take away from him the distinction of having been the first President of the United States to play what they have determined shall be their national game.

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I had a happy experience when one day I left New York, where it was most swelteringly hot, and went[Pg 188] up into the Green Mountains of Vermont for golf at the Ekwanok Country Club. A friend, Mr. Henry W. Brown of Philadelphia, who had played with me at my favourite Brancaster in Norfolk once, had heard I was somewhere in America and sent a letter to me directed to a chance address, which, being a golfing kind of address, found me with little delay. "Come," said Brown, "to Manchester-in-the-Mountains in Vermont. You ought to see our quite famous Ekwanok course, and I can promise you some fine mountain air, good golf, and a hearty welcome. If you will tell me what train you will come by, I will meet you with the car at Manchester Station." A moment's hesitation dissolved in firm decision and action, which took the form of a taxi-cab to the New York Central Station, and the north-bound train which left at twenty minutes to one in the afternoon. Then along we went by the Hudson river, up which I had sailed from Albany a year before, past the Palisades, past Poughkeepsie and the Catskill Mountains, through Troy and Albany, and as the daylight waned we were mounting upwards through the hills of sweet Vermont. At a quarter to eight the train reached Manchester, Brown and his car were waiting there, and we sped along the main street to his home.

It seemed that the silver moonlight was shining not upon an earthen road but glistening on snow. Little villas like chalets and chateaux of Switzerland lined the way and the people living in them could be heard in their laughter and song, for the dinner time was just gone by and yellow light shone from the windows, making that happy contrast with the coldness of the moonshine, that speaks of home and comfort. We passed the great hotel where five hundred people are constantly gathered together in the summer time from all parts of the States, and indeed from places far beyond the States, for there are Britons in numbers here, and travellers[Pg 189] from Africa and the deep southern lands, making such a cosmopolitan gathering of its size for drawing-rooms and bridge parties and the usual orderings of social gatherings as is not easily to be matched. And there is an amazing vivacity among all these people, for two reasons, one being that the American spirit at its best pervades, and the other that it is Ekwanok, the heartening, the vigour-making, the youth-restoring. In New York and Chicago at the end of the day one is a little apt to think of the wear and tear of life and the fading capacity of a good constitution; high up in the mountains of Vermont, in the shadow of the hills of Equinox, one revels in fresh youth again and has no more envy for the lad of twenty. And that again is a reason why Ekwanok is not like the other golfing places of America, and another following upon it is that this is, so far as I have discovered, the only truly golfing holiday resort in all the States, a place to which people go for the pleasure of the happy game and for hardly anything else, a place that lives and thrives on golf. From far and wide the Americans come to it and leave all their work behind, and are happy and leisurely as you rarely see them at other times. In Britain we have a very large number of resorts that are for holiday golf alone, and more are coming all the time, but this is a feature of golf that America in general has yet to know. If it comes to that, Manchester-in-the-Mountains is not so very high (that is a rather curious association of English ideas—Manchester and mountains, dingy streets with the smoke-thickened atmosphere of the Lancashire city and the big bold hills of God), but here is the mountain scent, enlivening, heartening. The house of my host, Breezy Bank as it is called, is set at the foot of one big mountain and looks across the green valley, where the golf course lies, out toward another—a delightful abode. A log fire[Pg 190] burned red on the big hearth, a kind hostess gave us welcome, and after a supper that embraced fresh green corn (it is the essence of the enjoyment of green corn that it should be taken quickly from the growing to the kitchen), we talked, over cigars and coffee, golf from one end of the game to the other, and right across it, and handled clubs, until bedtime came. Brown is keen, and he has sound views on the influence of the game on national character.

Next morning, with sunlight and breeze, we went along to the course, so near that a ball could have been driven to it from the lawn of Breezy Bank, where the master has been known to practise mashie shots by moonlight, and I was joined in foursome with Mr. Walter Fairbanks of Denver, Colorado, against B. and his son Theodore. What then happened is of no consequence; the tale may be told in Colorado but not in England. But the course—it is splendid, and reflects an infinity of credit upon Mr. James L. Taylor, the first in command, who has for the most part designed it, has constantly improved it, and has made it what it is. All the holes have abundant character. They are up and down, straight and crooked, interesting always, with a good fairway that gives fine lies to the ball, and putting-greens of the smoothest sort. We drove first down a hill with a slanting hazard that made awful menace to a slice, then up again and away out to the far parts, with some very pretty short holes. The gem of the collection of eighteen is the seventh, which has been called, and with some fitness, the King of American Holes. A great, fine, lusty piece of golf it is, 537 yards from the tee to the green, and every shot has to be a thoughtful, strong, and well-directed shot, with no girl's golf in it anywhere. It is a down drive from the high-placed tee, and the land below heaves over in a curious twisted way that demands very exact placing[Pg 191] of the ball. Then there is a strong and straight second to be played over a high ridge in front into which big bunkers have been cut. Afterwards there is plain country to a well-protected green. It is a great hole, a romantic one, and is well remembered. Some of the drive-and-iron holes that follow are splendid things, and this course was very well chosen for the Amateur Championship Meeting in 1914. When we were leaving it at the end of that day, the sun had just gone down behind big Equinox Hill, but presently and by surprise he sent a last good-bye. Round the mountain side a golden bar of light was cast, and it spread along the olive-coloured hill across the shadowed valley like a clean-cut shining stripe or a monotinted rainbow. These were the glorious Green Mountains of Vermont! We tarried until the sun went right away, and took with it that parting beam, and, sighing, we passed along.

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I have left to the last of these few remembrances, what is in many respects the greatest of American courses—the National Golf Links at the far end of Long Island. In recent times it has probably been more discussed than any other course on earth. A while since a number of very wealthy, ambitious, and determined golfers put their heads and their money together, and decided on the establishment of something as near perfection as they could reach. In pursuit of this idea they have so far, as I am informed, spent about two hundred thousand dollars, and are in the act of spending many more thousands. They have their reward in a magnificent creation, as great in result as in idea, or nearly. All the people in the golf world have heard by this time of this National Links, and have no doubt wondered upon it, and the extent to which the[Pg 192] extraordinary scheme that was developed a few years ago has been realised. It has been referred to as "the amazing experiment," and "the millionaires' dream," and so forth. Undoubtedly in its conception it was the grandest golfing scheme ever attempted. It came about in this way. America, with all its golf and money and enthusiasm, was without any course which might be compared with our first-class seaside links, the chief reason for her deficiency being that nowhere on either of her seaboards could be discovered a piece of land which was of the real British golfing kind. But at last a tract was found nearly at the end of Long Island, about ninety miles from New York, which was believed to be nearly the right thing. It was taken possession of by a golfing syndicate, and they determined there to do their very best. The question of expense was not to be considered in the matter. A member of the syndicate, Mr. Charles B. Macdonald, an old St. Andrews man, and one of wide golfing knowledge and experience, went abroad to study, photograph, and make plans of the best holes in Great Britain and on the continent. The whole world of golf was laid under tribute to assist in the creation of this wonder course. After exhaustive consideration a course was decided upon which was to embrace, in a certain reasonable measure, features of such eminent holes as the third, eleventh, and seventeenth at St. Andrews, the Cardinal and the Alps at Prestwick, the fifth and ninth at Brancaster, the Sahara at Sandwich, the Redan at North Berwick, and some others. The scheme was modified somewhat as the work progressed, but in due course the National Golf Links, a string of pearls as it was intended to be, was opened. Many different reports have been circulated as to the quality of the course, and the extent to which the object has been achieved. It has been described both as a failure and as a magnificent success.[Pg 193]

I preferred to go there alone and see things for myself without explanations and influences. A certain penalty had, however, to be paid for this enterprise. I shall not soon forget my journey to the Shinnecock Hills out at the end of the Island, nor the journey back again. It was on a glorious Sunday morning in October that I went to the Pennsylvania station and took train there for Shinnecock, which was a three-hours' journey along the line. In getting out at Shinnecock I was nearest to the course, but there were no cars waiting there, and the tramp that had to be made across country for two or three miles was one that might have suited an Indian brave better than it suited me, although I have an instinct and a desire always to find things and ways out for myself rather than be told and led. It was nearly noon; the sun was high, and it was burning fiercely. The so-called path was something of a delusion. It was more of a trail through a virgin bush country with a tendency to swamp here and there, and

occasionally one was led to a cul-de-sac. I could see the National Golf Links a little way ahead all the time. There was a big water cistern standing out against the sky-line, and there were some smoothly laid out holes, but grapes were never more tantalising to any fox than those holes are to the wanderer who tries to get there from Shinnecock along a route over which a crow might fly, and who determines that he will discover the elusive secrets of the National Links, however dearly the expedition may cost him. However, the enterprise succeeded, and the journey back from the course to the Southampton station was also accomplished despite the prevailing difficulties, and, with the sense of something having been attempted and done, we rode home on the Pennsylvania, and were back in New York by the same night—about the hardest day's golf business I have ever done.[Pg 194]

A certain disappointment is inevitably threatened when one visits a course of this kind about which one has heard so much beforehand. An ideal is established in the mind which cannot possibly be realised, and it is the fault of nobody. We do not know exactly what it is that we hope to see, but it is something beyond the power of man and Nature to achieve. But the National is a great course, a very great course. It is charmingly situated, most excellently appointed, and bears evidence of the most thorough and intelligent treatment by its constructors. Any preliminary disappointment there may have been soon wears away as the real excellence of the course and its difficulties are appreciated. Had we heard nothing of this copying, and did we not make comparisons between new and old in the mind, through which that which is new does not often survive, we should glory in the National at the first inspection of it. And the fact is, that the comparisons we suggest ought never to be made, though I, for one, was not aware of that till afterwards. Absolute copying was never intended; only the governing features of the British holes, the points that gave the character and quality to them, were imitated so far as could be done. That has been done very well, and some of the holes are very fine things. Those the design of which is based on such gems as the sixth at Brancaster and the eleventh at St. Andrews are very well recognisable. I should like to write much more about this course; it is a strong temptation. If I thought less of it and did not realise its greatness as I do, I should yield to the desire, and yielding, might rashly criticise as well as praise. But there is an imperative restraint. Upon a moderate course, or even a very good one, you may sometimes, if sufficiently self-confident, judge in one day's experience. But there are courses which, not because they grow upon you as we say, but because they command a higher respect[Pg 195] at once than is given to others, which do not permit of such presumption. I saw the National on one day only, though I hope to see it many times again, and to gain courage for comment upon it. Now, with cap in hand, I can only signify my respect and full appreciation that here is something that is by no means of an ordinary kind, the accomplishment of a magnificent enterprise, and no doubt the achievement of a great ideal. But I shall say, at any rate, that a links more gloriously situated than this one in Peconic Bay, with pretty creeks running into the land here and there, and hill views at the back, could hardly be imagined. The view as I beheld it from different parts on that peaceful sunny Sunday afternoon is one that I never shall forget. It is the ideal situation for a national course.

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To Mr. Macdonald thus belongs the credit for the initiation of what we may call the higher golf in America. In the last few years this movement has made strides as long and rapid in the United States as it has done in England, and above all other countries in the world America, which is so much dependent on her inland golf, having scarcely any other, is the country for this movement to be carried to its ultimate legitimate point. The day for very plain and purely and obviously artificial construction of inland golf courses is gone, the original inland system in all its stupidity and its surrender to difficulties has become archaic. It has come to be realised in this business that man may associate himself with Nature in a magnificent enterprise, and only now is it understood that this golf course construction is, or may be, a really splendid art. Landscape gardening is a fine thing in the way of modelling in earth and with the assistance of trees and plants and flowers and[Pg 196] the natural forces, while engineering across rivers and mountains is grander perhaps; but in each of these the man takes his piece of the world from Nature and shovels it and smashes it, and then, according to his own fancy and to suit his own needs, he arranges it all over again. But in the making of a golf course, while we have indeed to see that certain requirements of our own are well suited, knowing how particular and hyper-critical we have become, yet we wish to keep to plain bold Nature too, and we want our best work to be thoroughly in harmony with her originals. I believe that if we could express it properly to ourselves, we wish now to make our golf courses look as if they were fashioned at the tail-end of things on the evening of the sixth day of the creation of the world—just when thoughts had to be turning to the rest and happinesses of the seventh. And so the great architect now takes a hundred acres or more of plain rough land and forest, hills and dales among it, and with magnificent imagination shapes it to his fancy. The work he now does will endure in part, if not in whole, for ages hence, and so it is deeply responsible. It is a splendid art; I do not hesitate to say it is a noble art.

Mr. Colt, with his great thoughts and his splendid skill, has done fine work in several parts of the United States. The new courses of the Mayfield Country Club, and of the Country Club of Detroit, are splendid things. But Mr. Macdonald's creations—for more of them now follow upon the original at Southampton—are destined to be leading influences in the new American golf course construction. I have had some interesting talk with him upon these matters, and am glad to find that he is artist and creator enough to have the full strength of his own original opinions in this matter, especially as in some ways his ideals differ from those commonly accepted in Britain. I have been so much interested in [Pg 197] his views, and I think that these views are destined to have such an enormous influence upon American golf in the future, that I have asked him for some brief statement of them, an enunciation of his creed as an architect of courses, and he has kindly made it to me in writing, as follows:—

"To begin with, I think the tendency to-day is to overdo matters somewhat, making courses too long, too difficult, and with too much sameness in the construction of two-shot holes. To my mind a course over 6400 yards becomes tiresome. I would not have more than eight two-shot holes, and in constructing them I should not follow the ideas or fancies of any one golf architect, but should endeavour to take the best from each. While it is the fashion now to decry the construction of a hole involving the principles of the Alps or seventeenth at Prestwick, I favour two blind holes of that character—one constructed similar to the Alps, and another of the punch-bowl variety of hole some fifty yards longer than the Alps. It is interesting now to read the 'best hole' discussion that took place in 1901. The leading golfers of that time were almost unanimous in pronouncing the Alps at Prestwick the best two-shot hole in the world. The eleventh at St. Andrews and the Redan at North Berwick were almost unanimously picked as the best one-shot holes.

"To my mind there should be four one-shot holes, namely, 130, 160, 190, and 220 yards. These holes should be so constructed that a player can see from the tee where the flag enters the hole. The shorter the hole the smaller should be the green, and the more closely should it be bunkered. The most difficult hole in golf to construct interestingly is a three-shot hole, of which I would place two in the eighteen, one 520 yards and the other 540. The putting greens at these holes should be spacious. [Pg 198]

"This leaves us four drive-and-pitch holes—280, 300, 320, and 340 yards in length. These should have relatively small greens and be closely bunkered, one or two of them having the putting greens open on one side or corner so as to give a powerful, long, courageous driver, who successfully accomplishes the long carry, the advantage of a short run up to the green. The size and contour of the putting green and the bunkering should depend upon the character and length of the hole. The principle of the dog's hind leg can be made a feature of several holes advantageously. The gradients between the tee and the hole should be made use of in bunkering. Whenever it is possible it is best that the bunkers should be in view. A number of the holes should be built with diagonal bunkers, or bunkers *en echelon*, so constructed that the player who takes the longer carry shall have an advantage over the man who takes the shorter carry. The hazards for the second shot should be so placed and designed as to give a well-placed tee shot every advantage—in other words, should make a man play his first stroke in relation to the second shot. There should be at least three tees for every hole, to take care not only of an adverse or favourable wind, but also of the calibre of the player. It is necessary on a first-class golf course to have short tees for the poorer players, otherwise they are everlastingly in the bunkers. The lengths which I give should be measured from the middle of the middle tee to the middle of the putting green."

There is so much knowledge and good suggestion in this statement, and the matter is of such high consequence, that every player of the game should think well upon it.

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[Pg 199]

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE U. S. G. A., AND THE METHODS OF THE BUSINESS-MAN GOLFER, WITH A REMARKABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MUNICIPAL GOLF.

People in England or Scotland do not quite understand what a splendid thing for American golf is the United States Golf Association. It is so absolutely necessary for the game in America that I am sure there would be little



that is like golf there now if there had been no U. S. G. A., with its loyalty and attachment to St. Andrews. There would be few Americans coming to play on the links of the homeland of the game, and there would be no British golfers wandering happily among the American courses. American golf would have become as much like the old game as American college football is like the football that is played at Oxford and Cambridge, which is to say that it is not at all like it. America is not a country small in space like our own happy islands. There it is in its millions of miles, new everywhere, and with little communities of golfers so far apart as New York and San Francisco, Massachusetts and Arizona, and isolated golfers in the loneliest places trying to bring others to their pastime for the matches they would have. What should all these people, away from all the influences of the home of the game, hot with the spirit of freedom, unrestrained by laws and conventionalities, eager to [Pg 200] do things better than they have been done before—what should they care for St. Andrews and traditions, and the preservation of the unity of the game? As sure as eagles fly, and stars are bright, they would have made it to suit themselves in every community. Here they would have abolished the stymie, in another place they would have changed the size of the hole, away in Texas they might have permitted the introduction of the "mechanical contrivance," and soon there would have been a hundred golfs in the States, and not a real one among them. Just when this possibility, without being an immediate probability, was arising the U. S. G. A. came into existence. It joined all the golfers of America together in a republic for the preservation of the unity of the game, and for the promotion of its welfare in the spirit that the game had been cultivated in the homeland. And being thus given power, it has ruled with a strong hand. It has kept American golf in order as nothing else could have done, and as a governmental machine, I who have made some close examination of it, regard it as perfect, which is not to say that we need such a thing in Britain. In America I have had the pleasure of the intimate acquaintance of Mr. Robert Watson, Mr. Silas H. Strawn, Mr. G. Herbert Windeler, Mr. William Fellowes Morgan, Mr. Harry L. Ayer, Mr. John Reid, junior, and many others of the leaders of the Union, and better men for the direction of such a game as golf, in whose hands it is quite safe, there could not be. They hold the right spirit of the game, and they are wise men, conservative in their golfing ways. Mr. Windeler indeed is an old British golfer like Mr. Macdonald, who was one of the original gathering that established the U. S. G. A. In the December of 1894 the representatives of five of the leading clubs met and framed the constitution of the U. S. G. A., and [Pg 201] Mr. Theodore A. Havemeyer, of the Newport Club, was chosen president.

The constitution of the U.S.G.A. is an interesting study. There are two classes of members, active and allied, and the difference is that the active members, who exercise control, are clubs that have been steadied by age and experience, and have acquired dignity. The definition in the constitution is made thus: "Any regularly organised club in the United States, supporting and maintaining a golf course of at least nine holes, and whose reputation and general policy are in accord with the best traditions and the high ideals of the game, shall be eligible to election as an Active Member." Then, as to the Allied Members, it is said that—"Any regularly organised club of good reputation in the United States shall be eligible to election as an Allied Member." There are far more allied members than there are active members, and the former are only admitted to the latter when they have thoroughly proved their worth. Thus the allied clubs have always an ambition before them, and they can only achieve it by conducting their golf on the best and oldest plan. At every meeting of the Association each active club is entitled to be represented by one voting delegate whose appointment has to be certified in advance by his club to the secretary of the Association. Allied clubs have no voting privileges, but all members of active and allied clubs have the right to attend all meetings of the Association, and to participate in the discussion of any question. The active clubs pay thirty dollars a year for subscription, and the allied clubs pay ten. Article IX. of the Constitution gives the Association its power and authority. It says: "The acceptance of membership in the Association shall bind each club to uphold all the provisions of the Constitution, bye-laws, and other rules of the Association; and to accept and [Pg 202] enforce all rules and decisions of the Executive Committee acting within its jurisdiction. Any club failing in its obligations as above set forth may be suspended or expelled by a two-thirds vote of the Association, or by a two-thirds vote of all members of the Executive Committee; provided such club shall have been given due notice of the charge or charges preferred against it, and an opportunity to be heard in its own defence. Any club thus suspended or expelled by vote of the Executive Committee may appeal from its decision to the delegates at any annual or special meeting of the Association."

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After this about the machinery of American golf, consider the men. There are three classes of golfers in the United States, corresponding to some extent to similar classes in Britain, but they are rather more sharply defined than with us. There is the class that regards the game as a sport for competition, almost as a form of athletics, being mainly but not exclusively the younger class; there is the business-man class that believes in it as the ideal, and indeed the only recreation satisfying the needs of the times as a relaxation from the strain of life and work, and a means of promoting physical and mental efficiency, such people being as with us the largest

section and the mainstay in one sense of the game; and there is the humbler class who play upon the public courses.

I do not believe after the closest observation and most impartial consideration that the best American golfers are yet quite so good as ours, but in recent years they have been rapidly lessening the gap that has existed, their thoroughness, determination, and efficiency are most wonderful, and if they had our courses and climate they might become better than we [Pg 203] are. They think they will anyhow. As it is they are handicapped by lack of full-blooded seaside courses, and a climate that is by no means ideal for the game; and although by their zeal they have to some extent discounted that handicap, I feel that they can only neutralise it altogether and go beyond it by the production of the occasional genius. The good Americans seem to me mostly to play what we could call a plain, straight game. American courses are for the most part without any sharp undulations; there is nothing in America like our rolling seaside links. Therefore the players are not taught or induced to be making allowances for this and that in all the days of their golf from their youth upwards, and they have not the sea-coast winds to lead them in the same way as we have. So they have good reason to play straight to the hole, and never to depart from doing so without the most obvious and pressing cause. It follows from this that the American players have fewer "scientific" or "fancy" strokes at their disposal, and those who have visited this country have been remarked upon for the plain simplicity of their iron play. They seem to standardise their shots. But assuming that this is their principle or their system, it enables them to concentrate keenly and with fine effect on accuracy. Delicacy of touch, splendid judgment of distance, and perfection of execution are strong characteristics of the American players, who do not need to be reminded that there are no bunkers in the air. It is the straight game of the Americans with all its accuracy that is paying in their matches against us. At the same time I think that the comparative weakness of the Americans in wooden club play is a serious handicap to them, and their courses need to be tightened up to improve it. That "American hook" of theirs is a dangerous thing sometimes, and their round flat swings are looked upon [Pg 204] by some of our best British authorities with much suspicion.

But there is one most important way in which they are scoring over us. They are beating us in temperament, concentration, and determination, and in the capacity to make the very most of their own game, so that not a shot of it is wasted. This means very much. A man may be plus five, but of such a temperament and such ways that he habitually wastes two or three holes in a match through negligence or slackness. The Americans do not waste holes in this way. They waste nothing. The game of which they are capable is produced nearly every time at full quality and is made as effective as it possibly can be. The utmost pains are taken over every stroke; the man blames himself for nothing after it is made. His concentration is enormous; he is often inclined to race through the green, but his capacity for being slow and meditative, when necessary, is great; and most noticeable again is his persistence, which is another way of making the most of a game that a man possesses. Of course all these remarks are applied to the two classes of players in a very general way. There are many exceptions among the Americans and there are many among our players, but that they do indicate the tendencies in the two countries I am certain. The American game may not be as scientific and complete as ours, but its more serious exponents do make the most of it as ours do not, and probably the high importance that is attached to the numerous first-class tournaments they have over there has something to do with it. They believe in competitions more than we do.

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This matter of consideration and concentration is one to which every player should give closer attention. [Pg 205] His success is largely dependent upon it. He may think he concentrates enormously as it is, more than on anything else, but often he deceives himself. Not man in ten gets as much in effect out of his game as it is capable of. He walks to his ball and plays some kind of a shot, with a more or less hazy idea of what it is that he wishes to do. When he finds his object has not been accomplished he suddenly remembers something, and it is a case of "I should have known," or "If I had only thought," or "What a pity I did not look." With such people a round of golf is a succession of regrets, and it is the simple truth that the majority could do far better with their game if they did not waste so much of it by carelessness, thoughtlessness, and a sort of distraction which allows their minds to wander to other things than the stroke in hand, and sometimes by their conversation too. When a man has played a stroke he has quite sufficient to occupy his mind for the next minute or two in considering how he shall play the next one, and the many features of the case that will be presented to him.

It is a remunerative resolution to make at the beginning of the season, to think deeply upon all the points of match play, and then exploit the art of it with some thoroughness. It is not difficult. All who have attended the Amateur Championship meetings and have been close observers of what happens there can remember how even players of the very first class in this most important of tournaments let themselves get beaten by inferior players simply because they do not make the most of their game. They forget things, do not think enough, and play

strokes carelessly because at the time of doing so they seem to feel it does not matter. No stroke should ever be played as though it were not the most important of the game—as it might[Pg 206] turn out to be. The old maxim that if a thing is worth doing at all it is worth doing well, applies with tremendous force to match-play golf. Many a time when the result of a stroke played exactly as intended, is not what was anticipated, through some of the circumstances not having been taken into consideration, the mistake that was made is obvious then. The man excuses himself by saying that he cannot see and think of everything, but nine times out of ten he should have seen. The most fatal mistake, however, that many players make in the early part of the season when their match-playing qualities have not been properly revived, is in their letting matches slip, in not pressing home advantages that they gain, and, above all, being too indifferent upon the future in the early part of a match, and too careless when they get a lead. All this sounds very simple, very obvious, but it often takes the best part of a season to drive the lessons home into the minds of golfers who are losing matches through their weakness in fighting quality.

Now here are one or two samples of points in regard to which the golfer constantly neglects to display his cunning and is the loser thereby. Assuming that in the general way you can get as much length when it is wanted as the other man, always try to make him play the odd to you. You do so naturally with your tee shots and many of the others, but are not really thinking at the time that you are wanting him to play the odd. The man who is playing the odd, even from a very little way behind the other, is at a much greater moral disadvantage than is often suspected, and if the other man always noticed things as much as he should, he is at a greater practical advantage than he realises, for if his opponent fails he can see the cause of it, this remark applying especially to what happens in the short game. How many putts have gone wrong that never[Pg 207] need have done had the man who made them watched what happened when his adversary putted first! Then, again, on this point of making the other man play the odd the case is constantly recurring where both men are obliged to play short of some hazard, or to take a particular line to a hole which is not the straight one. The man who goes second will find it very much to his advantage if he tries to squeeze so closely up to the point of danger as to be just nearer to it than the other, the latter then having to play the odd and being then more inclined to press with it and perhaps to miss it. The man who is playing the odd is in a sense taking a shot into the unknown; the other man knows everything. That is just the difference. Another stupid mistake that many men make is to try experimental or fancy shots, perhaps with clubs that are unfamiliar to them, just because the other man has played two more. How many thousands of holes have been lost through that! The experimental shot fails, the other man makes a good one, the experimenter suddenly finds he has to fight for it, and a minute or two later is watching his adversary take the honour from the next tee. Again, what matches could have been won that were lost if the players had only shown half the sense that Mr. Hilton did in the Amateur Championship of 1912 at Prestwick, in picking his places for putting, as it were, always, whenever possible, running up so that he would have to putt uphill instead of down, the former being far the easier kind of putting. Nowadays there are inclines on every green and round about the hole, and a flat putt is a comparative rarity. But the average man never thinks of these inclines until he has to play along them. The time for most thinking about them is when making the stroke before, so that the putt may be along the easiest line to the hole. This is not a question of skill; it is simply one of[Pg 208] sense. A man can play short of the hole or past it, or to the right or left, and there will be one point from which the putting will be easier than the other. It may often happen that it would pay better to be four yards past the hole than two short of it, for you will not only have had the chance of holing, but the putt back may be an uphill one.

But with it all, the habit must be cultivated of thinking as much as possible in advance—thinking quickly and acting with decision. Questions of the value of practice swings have arisen lately. We have seen rather too much of these practice swings in some quarters. We may believe in the practice swing—just one or at most two. A man may be an experienced golfer, and he may have played a certain stroke nearly a million times before, but golf is essentially a game of fears and doubts, and apart from just setting the right muscles in a state of complete preparation for the task in hand a practice swing gives one a little confidence. The shot is shaped; there is nothing to do but repeat the stroke that has been made; it can be done. To that extent the practice swing may be thoroughly recommended. But some members of the young American School go farther than this, and it is questionable whether they are wise. For one thing the delicate muscles and the nervous system that are concerned with the stroke in hand are easily tired, and if the shot is a long one needing power the odds are against its being done so well after five practice swings as after one. Show me the man who can drive his best and straightest after five practice swings on the tee. Then there is the hesitation and doubt that are induced. I believe that in most cases these players are really waiting for an inspiration. They are not ready for the stroke they have to play. Jack White in once confiding to me some of the secrets of his successful[Pg 209] putting, said that when he went about on the green examining the line back and front, he was simply trying to gain time and nothing more. "I want to feel that I want to putt," he said, "and while I am waiting for that feeling coming on I can hardly stand motionless on the green or look up at the sky." It is that way with these Americans; they are waiting for an inspiration. But it does not always seem to be responsive, and they wait too long. A moment must

come when they are as ready for the shot as ever they will be in their lives; if they let it pass nothing but doubts and hesitations can follow, and that is the danger to the player of excessive slowness. He begins to fear his fate too much. And also one round of golf played like this makes a fearful mental strain, and how often do we see that men who win their morning matches by such methods look very tired and lose easily in the afternoon.

The case of Mr. Ouimet, who has so suddenly become a great power in American golf, has already been considered, and Mr. Walter Travis's high position was established long ago. Apart from these two, the new star and the old one, and the young professional M'Dermott, there are two others who hold a higher place in the opinion of the golfers of their own country and ours than any other players do, and those are Mr. Charles Evans, junior, of Chicago, and Mr. Jerome D. Travers, foremost players of the west and east as they respectively are. In every way Mr. Evans is a very delightful golfer. When we saw him at Prestwick in 1911 he was even then a brilliant player, and one who impressed British golfers as no other had ever done since Mr. Travis had won at Sandwich, and he had then an advantage which the winner of our championship had not—he had his whole golfing life before him. Since that time he has undoubtedly improved. He has[Pg 210] become physically stronger, experience has helped him, and he has greater resource and skill. And despite the fact that he has not yet won an American championship, there is this to be said for him, that in the sense of accomplishment, in variety of stroke, perfection of it, in playing the game as it was meant to be played, as we say, he is still, for all his failures, the best amateur golfer in the United States at the present time. But Mr. Evans is a man of very keen and somewhat too sensitive temperament. He is inclined sometimes to fear his fate unduly. Yet whenever we are inclined to judge him a little harshly for his temperament, let it be remembered that fortune has dealt him some cruel hurts, and that it is not a quality of human man to bear himself indifferently to perpetual adversity. When he was the last hope of his country at the championship at Sandwich in 1914, and striving gallantly, his opponent went to the turn in a record score of 31. To be merely sorry for "Chick" in such circumstances is inadequate; along with him we smiled at the absurd extent to which his ill-luck spitefully pursued him then. Even though it had to be counted, it was unreal. He must be a champion some time.

One of the greatest tragedies of his life, so far, was that he suffered in the appalling Amateur Championship at Wheaton, Illinois, in 1912—appalling by reason of the terrible heat that players and all others, including my unlucky but still deeply interested self, were called upon to bear. It has come to be nearly a settled understanding in Britain that the championships must be attended by weather quite ridiculously and most uncomfortably unseasonable. Thunderstorms and lightning, gales and floods—these are the accompaniments of the great golf tournaments of the year in the summer months of May and June, and matters seemed to reach a climax in 1913 when the progress of[Pg 211] the final match of the Amateur Championship at St. Andrews had to be suspended because of the terrific storm which flooded the putting greens until there were no holes to putt at, and when in the Open Championship at Hoylake shortly afterwards Taylor had to play his way to victory through a gale against which ordinary people could hardly stand up. Almost does it appear that the American climate is disposed to follow the bad British example in times of championships, seeing what happened at Brookline in the same season; but it was very different at Wheaton in the year when Mr. Hilton failed to retain the American Amateur Championship he had won the season before at Apawamis, and when Mr. Travers beat Mr. Evans in the final by seven and six. Mr. Norman Hunter and some others, Americans, were burned out of that championship by a temperature which at times was more than a hundred in the shade, and while some players conducted their game beneath sunshades that they carried, most of them had towels attached to their golf bags for body-wiping purposes. There was no escape from the heat anywhere, night or day, and no consolation in anything, unless it were that in the city of Chicago a few miles distant the people were reported to be even worse off than we were, and deaths were numerous. Well did we call that the blazing championship, and when I am asked, as is often the case, which of all championship experiences I recall most vividly, my remembrances of events in Britain, far more numerous as they are, give way to an American pair, the hot one at Wheaton in 1912, and the wet one of the British débâcle at Brookline a season later. But the sun at its worst could not diminish the enormous interest that there was in that Wheaton final, for the draw and the play had brought about the ideal match, from the spectators' point of view, and even that of the players too, Mr. Travers of the east and Mr. Evans of[Pg 212] the west, and finely did the Americans show their appreciation of what had come to pass by wagering incredible numbers of dollars upon it and watching it in thousands. That time it was thought that Mr. Evans would win, and he was three up at the turn in the morning round, but he lost two of the holes before lunch, and I am sure that the reason why he fell such an easy victim to Mr. Travers in the afternoon was that he grieved too much for the loss of those holes, and feared his fate when he need not have done. I know that Mr. Travers in that second round played golf of the most brilliant description that nobody could have lived against; but did Mr. Evans encourage him to do so? This matter of temperament might seem to be a fatal consideration for ever, being one of Nature and seemingly unalterable, were it not that we have had cases of fine golfers with weak temperaments who, perceiving their desperate state, have resolutely and with patience changed those temperaments, or curbed their influence as we should more properly say. The best modern instance of such a change being made is that of George Duncan, and never fear but that "Chick" will soon come to his own as well.

Mr. Jerome Travers is undoubtedly one of the strong men of golf to-day, a big piece of golfing individualism. At twenty years of age he won the American Amateur Championship, in 1912 I saw him win it for the third time, and the following year he won it again at Garden City. In his own golfing country he must be one of the hardest men in the world to beat. He plays the game that suits him and disregards criticism. He began to play when he was nine years old. A year later he laid out a three-holes golf course of his own at home—first hole 150 yards, second 180, third apparently about the same, back to the starting-point. There were no real holes—to hit certain trees was to[Pg 213] "hole out." For hour after hour this American child would make the circuit of this little course, and day after day he would work hard to lower his record for these three holes. At thirteen he started playing on a proper nine-holes course at Oyster Bay. At fifteen he became attached to the Nassau Country Club, and there, chiefly under the guidance of Alexander Smith, to whose qualities as tutor he pays high tribute, his game improved. His swing was wrong at the beginning. "Shorten your back swing, and take the club back with your wrists. Swing easily and keep your eye on the ball." That was Smith's advice to him, and he says it served him well. He began to place the right hand under instead of over the shaft, and that added more power to his stroke, and then he discovered that taking the club back with his wrists or starting the club-head back with them, increased its speed and gave him greater distance. Then it was practice, practice, practice for an hour at a time at every individual stroke in the game. He would play the same shot fifty times. He putted for two hours at a stretch, placing his ball at varying distances from the hole, trying short putts, long ones, uphill and downhill putts, and putts across a side-hill green where the ball had to follow a crescent-like course if it had to be holed out or laid dead. During the championship at Apawamis, when he was playing Mr. Hilton, he had what everybody declared to be an impossible putt of twenty feet, downhill over a billowy green, and he holed it because he had practised the same sort of putt before. In the next championship at Wheaton he did an "impossible" bunker shot and laid the ball dead from the foot of the face of the hazard because he had practised that shot also. Next to the Schenectady putter belonging to Mr. Travis his driving iron is, or should be, the most famous club in all America. It is[Pg 214] a plain, straight-faced iron with a round back, and is heavy, weighing sixteen ounces. It has a long shaft and a very rough leather grip, and was forged at St. Andrews. This and his other irons are kept permanently rusty. He carries very few clubs—five irons, a Schenectady putter, a brassey and a driver, but, as Mr. Fred Herreshoff, who turns caddie for him in the finals of championships, says, the two latter are for the sake of appearances only. He believes in the centre-shafted Schenectady putter, illegal here but allowed in America, as in no other. He calls for a very low tee, one that is only just high enough to give him a perfect lie, "the duplicate of an ideal lie on the turf." He plays his drives off the right foot, which is about three inches in advance of the left, the ball being just a shade to the right of the left heel, because in that position he finds it easier to keep the eye on the ball without effort, and in the strain of a hard match or competition every simplifying process like this is valuable.

But the most remarkable thing about his preparation for driving is his grip, which is unique. He does not employ the overlapper. He likes the right hand to be under the shaft; but this is the main point—that the first fingers are almost entirely free of the shaft, with the tips resting on the leather, curled inside the thumbs. Both thumbs are pressed firmly against the sides of the first joints of the second fingers, forming a locking device which prevents any possible turning of the shaft. He is an utter believer in this detaching of the first fingers from the club, and declares he could not play in any other way, his theory being that it permits better freedom of the wrists and enables him to get greater power into the stroke without deflecting the club-head from its proper sweep in the swing to the ball. With his driving iron he is a supreme master, and with it alone he has played a round of a difficult course in[Pg 215] America, Montclair, in 77. When I watched him win his third championship I decided that in whatever else he might excel he had a finer temperament for match play than almost any other player I had seen. Silent, imperturbable, not a trace of feeling in his countenance, he seemed to be mercilessly forcing his way to victory all the time. Only once since he became established as a champion kind of golfer have his nerves ever failed him, and that was on an occasion of supreme importance, and yet one when the strain upon nerves was not, or should not have been, unduly severe. I saw him lose his match to Mr. Palmer at Sandwich in 1914, and there was something nearly as mysterious about that occurrence as there was about the victory of Mr. Ouimet at Brookline—far more than there was about the defeat of the latter at Sandwich by Mr. Tubbs, for then Mr. Ouimet simply played a poor but not a timid game. But in the Palmer-Travers match the American for the first time for years was afraid. Half way round, all the watchers were saying so, saying his nerves were catching at his shots. Knowing the man, having seen so much of him in America, I could not believe it then; but before the round was ended the truth was clear. His nerves had failed, and it was responsibility that had caused them to do so. He could not possibly have played so poorly otherwise. It was not the real Travers who played that day.

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The middle-aged business-man golfer is an important individual in the general golfing scheme of things in the United States. He is that elsewhere, but he stands out most in America. Well enough does he know how the

game is good for him. The early American golfers (those of from ten to twenty years ago) adopted the game[Pg 216] enthusiastically, because it answered exactly to certain requirements they had in mind in regard to creating and preserving physical fitness. The American business man leads a quick life and a hard one and, in recent years particularly, his pursuit of this physical fitness has become something of a craze with him, for the reason that through it he seeks to bring the human machine to the highest point of working efficiency and, at the same time, enable the human man to derive more enjoyment and satisfaction from the pleasures of life. This is not a vague, subconscious idea in the American; it is a clear, definite scheme, adopted by thousands and thousands of those who have devoted themselves to the game. Hence their generous support and excellent enthusiasm. The country swarms with men, two-thirds way through an ordinary lifetime, who have only been playing the game for five or six summers and no winters—for in very few places in the northern parts of the United States is any play possible between the late fall and the spring—and who can play a good six-handicap game, British reckoning, for in America they have a system of handicapping according to which scratch is the lowest, and their six handicap is about equivalent to our two or three. The majority of our middle-aged men seem to resign themselves to the idea that in no circumstances can they ever become really good players, and they pretend they are satisfied to make their way round the links merely for the sake of the health and exercise that they obtain from so doing. Perhaps in a sense they are wise, but still it is certain that more than half of the joys and pleasures of golf are missed by those who never feel any improvement being made, who never rise above a steady mediocrity, and who never feel the thrills of playing above their ordinary form.

The business-man golfer is seen at his best at the[Pg 217] country clubs near to the great cities. There is nothing elsewhere which for its healthy, honest pleasures and the satisfaction it yields is comparable to the American country club and the life that is pursued there. It gives to the busy man the ideal relaxation he could not obtain in any other way. I spent several days at one of these country clubs, a railroad journey of an hour or so from Chicago, and the experience was illuminating. The American business-man golfer works in the city for part of the day in the summer and spends the rest of his time at the country club, where the predominating features of the life are golf, rest, and sociability. These country clubs are provided with a large number of bedrooms, and are surrounded with cottages, nicely equipped, which generally belong to them and are let for periods to the members. The vitality of the man of whom we are thinking is enormous. He is out of his bed at the club at about six o'clock in the morning, and goes through a process of shower baths, with which the establishment is splendidly appointed. By seven o'clock he is dressed in the thinnest flannels, and sits down to breakfast with thirty or forty other members at 7.15. At this time he is jacketless, and all in white. A large glass of iced water is laid before him to begin with, and then the half of a grape fruit or a cantaloup, with a piece of ice stuck in the middle, is presented as the first course. These things, as we get them in America, are very delicious. At once an argument begins round the table about the qualities of different balls and clubs, and I am closely questioned about the way we do things in England. Next, there is oatmeal porridge laid before us, with tea or coffee, and the men begin to match themselves for the afternoon round. Mr. A says he will play Mr. B for a certain stake, but the latter finds he is already engaged to play Mr. C for a higher one.[Pg 218] Eventually, Messrs. A, B, and C agree to play a three-ball match for still more dollars. Such extensive wagering is not the rule, but it is frequent. After the porridge, bacon and eggs, calf's liver and bacon, or something of that kind, is served with a baked potato, a little more iced water may be called for, and there is marmalade with toast and sweet cakes, and, then at a quarter to eight, all get aboard the club motor-omnibuses and are whizzed away to the railroad station, light jackets very likely carried on their arms.

Before nine o'clock they are hard at work in the big city. Some early birds were even there by eight o'clock. They work very hard, no dawdling of any kind, and by one or two o'clock they have finished for the day and are off back to the golf club as fast as they can go. Frequently they are back in time to lunch there. Soup, some meat done in American fashion, an American salad, blueberry pie, iced water, and a glass of cold tea with a lump of ice in it and a piece of lemon, finishing up with a large supply of ice cream, and then a big cigar, are what the American golfer goes out to play upon. The caddie whom he takes out to carry his clubs costs him tenpence an hour—always paid by the hour, during which he is in the golfer's service, and not by the round. By this time the player is in thinner and lighter clothes than ever, and he has been cooled down by more shower baths. His round is played very much as it might be done in England. He is very keen on his game. But he takes a little more time on the consideration of his stroke when once he has reached his ball than we do, and he is most deeply painstaking. Towards the end of the match he may develop an idea for playing the enemy for a number of dollars a hole for the remainder of the round, and when it is all over, everybody is quite satisfied with everything. More shower baths, a[Pg 219] lounge, and a cigar, and then a long American dinner, with vegetables very fancily done, corn cobs, sweet salads, plenty of iced water, ice creams, "horses' necks"—ginger ale with lemon and ice—and so forth. Long arguments on the verandah upon the respective merits of British and American golf, and at ten o'clock this busy golfer of the United States gets himself off to bed. He never sits up late. He sleeps, of course, with his windows wide open, with a wire netting arrangement to keep out the flies and mosquitoes, and as he falls away to his slumber he feels that golf is the best of games, that America is the chief of countries, and that

this is the most agreeable of all possible worlds. Here I have been writing in general terms, but I should add that each and all of my details are taken from the life, from personal experience at one of the best of these country clubs.

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There are some interesting characters in American golf as everywhere, and the very wealthy golfer in the States is often to be considered. Mr. John D. Rockefeller, the "Oil King," is, as all of us know, an extremely rich man. He is also a business man, if ever there was one. And he is extremely fond of golf. His case may have as little to do with the matters just discussed as you may think, but I shall present it as I found it out. A few years gone Mr. Rockefeller, who has a capacity for giving advice of a very shrewd and worldly character, announced his intention of retiring from the presidency of the Oil Trust and of devoting a fair part of the remainder of his life to playing golf. Since then he has discovered that it is easier to make a million dollars than to hole a five-yard putt, for the Rockefeller millions now make themselves and the putts are as unholeable as ever.[Pg 220] His methods of playing, and his moralisings on the game, are not like those of any other man. Readers must judge for themselves as to whether they have anything to learn from them; I think they may have something. Take this case for an instance. One day when playing the game he made a very good shot on to the green, and, ever ready to draw a moral from the game of golf which would apply to the greater game of life, turned to his companions and said: "Waste of energy I regard as one of the wanton extravagances of this age. Rational conservation of energy and temperance in all things are what the American nation must learn to appreciate." Mr. Rockefeller is now seventy-five years of age, and he was nearly sixty before he first began to play. He became an enthusiast at once, and, as with most other men, his golf aggravated him, goaded him, tantalised him, and made him ambitious and determined. He began to find things out and to invent new ideas as rapidly as any of us have ever done. He said the game changed his life. Made him happy. Brought back his youth to him. His friends when they played with him declared that he was not a cantankerous old man, but a really charming fellow. Golf was doing him good. It was making a new man of him, as it does of all others. But he did not get on at it as quickly as he thought he ought to do. He found that there were rather more things to remember in a very short space of time when making his shot than he had ever had to remember before, and that for the first time in his life he was liable to forgetfulness on the most important occasions. Then he acted on the business man's principle of getting others to do things for him. He got others to do the remembering. For a time whenever he went to play a match he had three caddies attending on him; even now he generally has two. He employed them for other purposes than[Pg 221] carrying clubs. When he was about to make a stroke No. 1 Caddie stepped up to him and said respectfully but firmly: "Slow back, Mr. Rockefeller, slow back!" He might otherwise have forgotten to take his club slowly back from the ball at the start of the swing. This adviser having moved away, Caddie No. 2 went forward and said: "Keep your eye on the ball, Mr. Rockefeller, keep your eye on the ball!" Then, in turn, Caddie No. 3 advanced and spoke warningly: "Do not press, Mr. Rockefeller, do not press!" So, reminded of the common faults, the Oil King made his stroke and did not commit them, but was guilty of several others, and realised a little sadly when the ball did not travel as it should that he needed a hundred caddies for warning, and not three. Still, there is some good sense in this method, and the man who made it a strict rule to say to himself always, just before a stroke, what Mr. Rockefeller hired the boys to say to him would make fewer bad shots than he does.

Mr. Rockefeller has a very nice course of his own on undulating land at Forest Hill, on the edge of Cleveland, Ohio, and there he has parties to play with him constantly. He is fond of cycling, and instead of walking after his ball when he has struck it, he takes his cycle on to the course with him, jumps on to it, and wheels himself along to the place from which the next shot must be made. By this means he not only saves much time, and gets more golf in an hour than we do, but considers that he derives more physical benefit from the combination than he would from golf and walking. More than this, he knows exactly how far he has hit the ball every time, for he counts the number of turns of the pedals he has to make in cycling from point to point, and calculates accordingly. He does not lose his temper when he makes a bad shot or a series of such, as some have suggested, but he is quite ecstatic when[Pg 222] he makes a good one; and, despite his seventy-five years, has been known to leap high into the air when the result of his efforts has been specially good. He is a most thoughtful player, and takes the utmost care always to note effects and to try to attach causes to them. "Now gentlemen," he has said, "that was really a very good stroke that I made then. You observe that I am learning to make better use of my left arm. It was that Scotchman who told me of the trick, but somehow I have never been able to use it advantageously until now." He has a large number of clubs in his bag, including all the most usual implements, while two or three have been made according to his own special ideas. One of his caddies also carries a large sunshade to hold over him while playing when the weather is uncomfortably warm, and it is the duty of this boy also to give a hand at pushing the bicycle when the line to the hole is uphill and Mr. Rockefeller finds the

pedalling too much for him unaided. So you see that there is nothing that is conventional about Mr. John D. Rockefeller and his golf. You would hardly expect it.

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Now for the public or municipal golf in America; it is one of the strong features of the game in the United States that impressed me most. The average player in Britain, where the municipal golf movement is making slow headway, may be surprised to know that there is such a thing across the Atlantic; let him understand, then, that public golf in America is far ahead of public golf in Britain. Some Americans of great golfing experience, not confined to their own country, have not hesitated to say that they will "make America the greatest golfing country in the world." If we disregard such a challenge, there are yet circumstances[Pg 223] and forces in operation in America of which serious notice must be taken, and the first of them is this great movement that is progressing in favour of municipal golf. The whole vast country is taking to it. The leaders of the people are appreciating the necessity of it and preaching it. They say that the times are desperately strenuous, that an antidote is needed, an ideal relaxation for body and nerves, a perfect recreation and diversion, and that, having tried everything and thought of other possibilities, they have come firmly and decisively to the conclusion that golf is the only recreation that meets the requirements of the times. Therefore they say that it must be provided for everybody, for the "common people," and given to them absolutely free with every inducement put forward for them to play it. The result is that public golf in America is already advanced to such a state as is almost incredible to those who have not seen it there. I have seen it. In New York, Boston, Chicago, Kansas, Louisville, Milwaukee, Elgin, Toledo, and a host of the smaller places, there are good public courses. In the large cities there are often two or three. Chicago has now three and a fourth was being made when I was there last, a fine long course in the Marquette Park. Two of the existing courses are in the Jackson Park, one being eighteen holes and the other nine. The third is in Garfield Park. The full-sized course in Jackson Park is quite an excellent thing. The turf and the putting greens are well tended, the views are pleasant, and the play is absolutely free to all who obtain the necessary permit from the Parks Commissioners. The regular player may have the use of locker and dressing-rooms in the pavilion, and good meals may be obtained at a reasonable cost. How shall we wonder then that the Americans take kindly to this game and are becoming overwhelmingly enthusiastic at it, or that more than a[Pg 224] hundred thousand games are played on one single course at Jackson Park alone in the course of a year? Though for the best part of the winter there is snow on the ground and play is impossible 105,000 games were played on the long course at Jackson Park during 1912 up to the beginning of October, and the news just reaches me that on one day at the very beginning of this season of 1914 nearly 900 tickets were given out! On a fine morning in the summer there will often be a little crowd of players waiting at the first tee for their turn to start at the dawn of day, and as many as two hundred have been counted there at seven o'clock in the morning. Having finished their game on ordinary mornings these people go off to their work, and they "hustle" all the more for the shots that they have played and hope to play again before the falling of the night. It is the same in the Franklin Park at Boston, in Van Cortlandt Park in New York, and everywhere. In this matter these Americans have sense. If public golf in England is ever to be a good and useful thing we must do as the Americans do, and if we do not the people will be the poorer, and we shall be sorry. Corporations must provide free golf, and they must be satisfied with the good done to the people, and not take the narrow view that the balance-sheet must show a direct profit apart from the indirect one that is certain. They must also put their courses in central and convenient places where people will be attracted to them, and which will not take the greater part of the time available to reach them. The game must be played in central parks which will then become more useful than they have ever been so far, and for the first time will be a real joy to the people who pay for them. I may be an enthusiast in golf, but I have gone deeply into this matter and studied it in its every bearing, and I know that I am right.[Pg 225]

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And the Americans are gaining in another matter—they are bringing their young boys into the game. I have been to preparatory schools where they have their own little courses and their school championships. The boys like it, the masters encourage it, and the grown-up players admire the youngsters' enthusiasm. This is the way that "prodigies" are produced. In England we do not encourage the boys to play golf. The head-masters of schools say that it is a selfish game and that it is bad for them. I wonder how much these principals have thought of the moral qualities that must exist in the good golfer who knows how to play a losing match and perhaps save it, and how long in real argument before an impartial tribunal the contention would hold that it would be better for the young boy to stand for hours in the deep field at cricket on a hot summer's day than for him to learn to play golf and learn to keep a tight hold of himself when the whole scheme of things might seem to be breaking up. Cricket and football are great games, and they are splendid things for boys, but that golf is inferior to them in what it



does for character I deny, and if the comparison is pressed the golfers with me can put forward an invincible case. Anyhow the fact is there that young America is getting golf and young England is not, and that will make a difference some time some way.

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[Pg 226]

## CHAPTER IX

### CANADIAN COURSES, AND A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT AT TORONTO, WITH MATTERS PERTAINING TO MAKING A NEW BEGINNING.

Towards the end of an afternoon in September, rounds being done, I stood with Mr. George Lyon (who is a kind of John Ball of the Dominion of Canada, having won the championship of his country seven times) on the heights where stands the club-house of the Lambton Golf and Country Club in Ontario, and we looked across the valley along which the course is traced to the woods on the opposite side where there were some fiery crimson spots to be seen as if burning amid the mass of foliage that was olive or tinting down to brown. They were the maple leaves of Canada, the emblem of the new land, of which it is prophesied that it shall be the greatest country of the earth. In early days the Canadians dabbled with the lacrosse which the Indians played, and some of the invaders, too, brought their cricket with them and taught it to others whom they found there. Then the people who are near to the borders of the United States, and are somewhat impressed with the American ways of doing things, have been cultivating an interest in baseball for its spectacular properties. Rounders revised is well enough for those who are within shouting distance of Buffalo and for places like Toronto, but I could never believe that such a game or [Pg 227] pastime, whatever its merits—and I know that it has many—could suit such a very serious, contemplative, cold, and earnest people as the Canadians are. I regard the nature of these people, as I have had the opportunity of considering it, as more serious and intense than that of any other, and I know only one recreation beyond those that are the simplest and most essential, as of roaming in the untamed country, fishing, shooting, and hunting, that is agreeable to such a nature. They also know it; they have declared for a national game.

There is this to be said at the beginning for Canadian golf and its courses, that the general atmosphere of the game in this great country, rough and often bare and primitive as still it is, seems to be much nearer the atmosphere of golf in Britain than that of any other country different from us. One misses the sea-coast links, courses are long distances apart, fine players are comparatively few, for the men of Canada are still so busy and so earnest that they have not even time to play, but yet there is a fine chain of the game all the way from St. John's to Vancouver. There is more of the peculiarity of British sporting instinct in the Canadian than in any other person out of the British Isles; he likes what we like, and he likes it in the same way and for the same reasons. Except that the coldness, like that of the Scot, is sometimes too much exhibited in him, and that even on suitable occasions he is reluctant to demonstrate his enthusiasms, so serious he is, so deep he looks, I have found him to be a splendid opponent with an agreeable persistency, and a most desirable partner in a foursome. Here in Canada there are trestle tee-boxes, a few—but only a few—of the club-houses are built and equipped in the manner of the Americans, betokening an existing prosperity and a provision for that greater one which is felt to be as sure [Pg 228] as the fruit and the corn of the following season; but otherwise golf seems much like what it is at home, and especially do we feel like that when we reach the old places where the game first took root out there. There is a Canadian Golf Association to rule the affairs of the game in the country with a certain subservience to home and St. Andrews as the Dominion holds to Westminster, and such a ruling authority is necessary in a new and wide country like this where so much pioneering is being done, just as it is necessary in the United States and in Australia. The chief function of such an authority is to keep the game together, hold it compact and maintain it in even uniformity with the game elsewhere. There is no blame to the Canadians because they have not associated themselves with the subtle and insoluble mysteries of the British handicapping system, but have followed the American lead in this matter and put their best champions at scratch. Otherwise they are full British still, and even if they have their doubts upon the wisdom of the edict of St. Andrews which banned centre-shafted clubs and the Schenectady putter of American origin, they have remained loyal to the law without dissenting as the Americans did. So in Canada you may not use the Schenectady. You may putt with it on one side of the Niagara Falls but not on the other side.

It is fortunate that a ball cannot be played across the Falls, or over those whirling Rapids, or some puzzling international complications might arise. The adventures are called to mind of two great scientists, the late Professor John Milne, who made such a fine study of earthquakes and could feel them in the Isle of Wight when they were taking place in Asia, and Professor Sims Woodhead, the eminent Cambridge pathologist, when they went to the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science when it was held in [Pg 229] South Africa. They travelled to the Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River, and there they contemplated a mighty carry of a hundred and sixty yards over roaring, foaming water. The keen golfer is always prepared, for the emergencies of the game are constant and attractive, and Mr. Milne produced driver and ball, and, with a fine nerve and eyes that were controlled most marvellously, delivered a golf ball from one side to the other for the first time since the world began. The pathologist admired the achievement and emulated it. He also carried the Falls of the Zambezi. It were better that these greedy men had left it at that and been well satisfied. However, they came to think they might go on with this majestic carry continually, and generous Fortune chided them. Crocodiles took the balls that they drove into the Zambezi.

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Let us take a look at Lambton. From my room in Toronto I rang up Lyon, whom I had met several times in England, and asked him to guess the name of the caller; he gave the name without hesitation, though he had no more reason to know that I was in Canada than in Tasmania. So quite in a matter-of-fact way we met on the following day in a Grand Trunk car starting from the Union station, and inquired of each other as to the ball that each was using. The journey from Toronto is one of only a few minutes, and soon after the stopping of the train the feet may tread on some of the nicest golfing turf that is to be found out of England, and the reason is palpable, for here are the big bunkers of the proper kind made of real yellow sand, which is natural to the place. When they need new sand bunkers at Lambton they cut them open and there they are. So sandy is the place that sometimes [Pg 230] they have a difficulty in making the grass grow properly, and one result of these favourable natural conditions is that the course is better bunkered than most others on the American continent. Tee shots and approaches must be played well, and at the very first green the hint is given that the short game must be well done. The fourth hole is one of the jewels of Canadian golf. The teeing ground is on a height, and below it is a series of descending plateaux like giants' steps until the level is reached. When he has made a very passable drive the player is called upon with a very proper second to carry the Black Creek which guards the green and is coiled like a snake about it. The shot must have fair length and it must be very straight as well. Normally the hole is 365 yards long, so that in mere distance it is not a terrible thing, but when medals are being played for its length is stretched out to the four hundred yards. At the sixth the stream which they call Humber comes into the reckoning. It is a nice two-shot hole, and the seventh is an excellent short one with the inky creek here again. With the stump of a tree protruding from the water, large leafy growths upon the surface, a general sleepiness and the green in a sequestered corner beneath a shading hill, this is quite one of the most attractive of water holes. It is a strong hole, too, with fear about it, for the carry is one of 165 yards, and I was told that when Miss Rhona Adair, now Mrs. Cuthell, several times lady champion, was in these parts some years ago she twice did the carry and a third time her ball skimmed the water and reached the green after all. This was good work for a lady, especially as I rather fancy she must have been using the gutty ball at that time.

The greens at Lambton are generally excellent, and they have adopted a means for keeping them in good [Pg 231] order which, though it has been tried in other parts of America, has not to my knowledge been employed elsewhere. I have heard objections raised against it, but the results at Lambton are uncommonly good. Nearly all the greens here are kept properly moistened by a process of sub-irrigation, and are never watered on the surface. Below the green there is a deep bed of cinders, and over this and about eighteen inches from the grass there is a network of water pipes made of a hard porous clay, "weeping clay" they call it, the entire under-surface of the greens being covered with them. At the corner of each green there is a feed pipe connecting with this network, and once a day the water supply is laid on to it and all the pipes under the green are loaded. The heat of the sun then slowly draws the water through the porous pipes and up to the surface, and the results of the process are uniformly good. Lambton is a fine institution altogether. There is a short ladies' course as well as the other, a fine toboggan chute down the slope in front of the club-house, and the latter is in all respects an admirable place, well fitted with baths, bedrooms, and public apartments that are elegant and comfortable. This place has something to do with Toronto life of to-day. There are seven hundred members, and now it costs a new one the equivalent of six hundred dollars in his first year. He has to get a hundred-dollar share in the club to begin with, and these are at such a premium that he has to pay five hundred dollars for one. On one of the walls of the club-house is a life-size portrait of the champion of the country in a characteristic attitude with his brassey under his arm.

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The case of Toronto is very interesting. The club, which takes the name of the city and is one of the[Pg 232] oldest in the country, was started in 1876, and completely reorganised some eighteen years later. The pretty little course that it had until lately was on the outskirts of the city, with an old and quaint farm-house, which had from time to time been enlarged, for a club-house. As to the course, it was quite nice. It was very undulating, ravines, gullies, and belts of trees being prominent everywhere. The turf was good, and some of the holes were excellent. In the club-house there were fine trophies and some old prints, and a plan of the old course at St. Andrews, with a photograph of old Tom Morris attached to it, signed "From Tom Morris, to the members of the Toronto Golf Club, 1896." Everything belonging to this old course was sweetly mellow, and one's visit there made a pleasant experience. But it met a fate which has been common enough near London but rare elsewhere. The speed of Toronto's expansion brought it about, and, owing to the encroachments of the builders, the club had to move. I was there at the parting, and it was a sad one. Its members, however, being a very wealthy and enthusiastic body of gentlemen, determined to make for themselves a new home which should be as good as anything that could be done, and their ambition was fulfilled. Etobicoke! It is one of the wonders of the west, and I was the first wandering British player to set his foot upon it.

Etobicoke is several miles out from Toronto, and here with the money that the club obtained from the sale of the old course they bought 270 acres of what was virgin land, being for the most part covered with trees at the time. This they had cleared, ploughed, and properly prepared, and Mr. Harry Colt came out from England to lay out the course. His finished work, as I have seen it, must rank as one of his masterpieces. As on so many of the Colt courses[Pg 233] there is something of a Sunningdale look about the holes, and nearly all are extremely good. A very fine short one is the fourth and one with which the architect himself was much in love when he had completed the design from the natural materials that were at his hand; and the tenth is a wonder of its kind, the hindmost tee being on a hilltop from which a glorious view of the course is to be had, with Lake Ontario beyond it, while some way lower down the slope are second and third tees, making the distance shorter. The soil is sandy, the turf is good, and the course must be considered to rank as first class absolutely. Mr. W. A. Langton, who went over it with me, said he believed they had come into possession of what would be the finest golf course in America when it has matured, and his judgment may be right.

Many parts of the world were laid under tribute for the making of this course at Etobicoke where the club is still called by the good old simple name, the Toronto Golf Club. It was designed, as I have said, by an English architect, and in order to give a grass to the course that would stand the rigours of the climate better than the ordinary grasses with which courses in North America are generally sown, seeds were obtained from Finland. Then nearly all the rough work of construction was done by Bulgarians and Roumanians, these immigrants being splendid for work of this kind. They were paid at the rate of about seven shillings a day, and they lived in huts which they made on the ground and saved the greater part of the money that they earned. A little over £16,000 or 80,000 dollars were paid for the land, and about the same amount was spent on its preparation and completion as a course; while £20,000 or 100,000 dollars were spent on the building and equipment of a splendid club-house, embracing the utmost comfort and[Pg 234] convenience, with about fifty bedrooms. This is a members' club, and the club has all the members and money that it needs, and it is not a speculative enterprise in any way whatever. But British golfers must surely pause with wonder when they hear of a place like Toronto spending £50,000 on a new golf course! Such is the enthusiasm of the Canadian for the game, that while this enterprise was afoot a six-holes course was being constructed alongside it, at a cost of £10,000, for a gentleman who intended to build a house near by to which he might ask his friends.

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One pleasant day when staying at Montreal I went out to Dixie, a few stations along the Grand Trunk line, where there is the course of the Royal Montreal Club, to be regarded now as the oldest properly established club in the Dominion. This one alone has that title of Royal which Queen Victoria gave it permission to use in 1884. In its early days the course was in Mount Royal Park, overlooking Montreal. Out here at Dixie a certain flavour of the old spirit and good strong sporting simplicity of the game are tasted. The course is somewhat flat and parky, and big banks of bunkers stretch across the fairway, making the general style of the architecture very much of the Victorian, but the undulations and unevennesses of the banks and hollows are redeeming features. Some of the holes are good and the putting greens are excellent, but generally the course suffers from the absence of testing second shots. There is a magnificent view up the river from the seventh tee. A house agent might honestly declare that the club-house is commodious and comfortable. It was made before it was the fashion to erect palaces on golf courses, and sheet-iron bulks largely[Pg 235] in its composition; yet it is cosy enough inside, and contains many relics of peculiar interest. In a glass case there are some ancient clubs with which members

played in the early days, and a leather belt for which they competed, the names of the winners being written on the inside.

There are many other courses in Montreal and round about it. There is the Beaconsfield Club with its place situated some way up the river, reached by the G. T. R. at Point Claire. The part of Fletcher's Fields in Mount Royal Park, on which the Royal Montreal Club first played, is now in the occupation of the Metropolitan Club, and is only about five minutes' ride by car from the centre of the city. On the eastern slope of Mount Royal is the course of the Outremont Club, which, at the time of my visit, was about to go forward to a new and great enterprise; while on a plateau at the western end of Mount Royal are the nine holes of the West Mount Club, most charmingly situated, with fine views of the city and the river.

At Ottawa there is a course which ranks high among the very best on the continent. It is different in character from that at Dixie, for here there are ravines and gullies, and the land is strongly undulating everywhere. The bunkers and other hazards are natural, the putting greens are smooth, and the subsoil is of sandy loam. It is on the other side of the Ottawa River, beyond Hull, and owing to its being exposed to a broad reach of the stream it is seldom that there is not much wind blowing across it. And there are courses all the way from east to west of this wonderful, blossoming Canada. We find that wherever we wander in the Dominion we are not much distant from a golf club. Even when on a day I sailed across Lake Ontario and made the Gorge Valley trip to the Niagara[Pg 236] Falls there was golf near by had it been wanted. Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, round and about the Rockies, and up them too—everywhere the game is played. I was told that when the course at St. John, New Brunswick, was started in 1897, Mr. H. H. Hansard, who made the opening stroke, holed from the tee in one. Holes in one have been done in many curious circumstances, but surely this is one of the most interesting of all. Compare the excellent beginning of St. John with what happened the other day when a new course was being started here at home. I am sorry to say that the municipal dignitary upon whom the chief responsibility was cast missed the ball the first time, and also the second, but contrived to move it from the tee at the third attempt.

A note has just reached me from a friend in the Dominion saying that out on the Gulf of Georgia, on the coast of Vancouver, they are reaching forward to a golf ideal. They have planned and started there a new town, which they have called Qualicum, of which the golf course is the central feature. They have laid out a fine one along the shore, one that has splendid natural qualities, and they are doing their best to make it understood that here is a golf city if ever there was one, for they have christened the streets and roads by such names as St. Andrews Road, Berwick Road, Portrush Road, Rye Road, Sandwich Road, and Dollymount Road; and there are others with the names of Hoylake, Sunningdale, and all the rest of our British best.

Friends whom I consulted in the matter declared there was no golf in Quebec, little but French people, French talk, and French games of two generations back, the Canadian French not yet having adopted the sport to which so many of the Parisians have attached themselves with great earnestness. I was barely satisfied[Pg 237] with such denials, and when, after another night on the C. P. R., I found myself on a glorious Sunday morning on those famous heights of Quebec, whence the view is one of the most magnificent in the world, I set about investigating the matter all alone. I can hardly say why, but somehow I strongly suspected the Plains of Abraham, the big, bare piece of land on the heights overlooking the St. Lawrence, on which Wolfe and Montcalm, more than a century and a half ago, fought that great fight, and died. I have always found it as a most remarkable thing that where great battles have been waged, and big encampments made, golf courses in a great number of cases have been laid out there later. Sure enough, then, the game was here on the Plains of Abraham. I had just been looking upon the pillar with the simple inscription, "Here died Wolfe victorious," and had walked for the length of two or three good drives towards the citadel end of the plain, called, I think, the Cove Fields, when putting greens came to view, with sticks not two feet long and bits of red rag attached to them in the holes. The greens and the teeing grounds were rough as could be, and there were no proper bunkers on the course, but plenty of trouble for all that, the ground being coarse and stony. The public could roam about the place just as it pleased, and did so, and there did not seem to be anything to prevent any one from playing the game on this course. It looked just like public golf on common land, and though it is a far cry from Blackheath to Quebec, there is something in the nature and character of this golfing ground at the historic Canadian port to remind one of England's oldest and crudest course. I discovered afterwards that the Quebec Golf Club, a club without a club-house, had acquired the rights to play on it; that this club is one of comparatively early origin; that its members are clearly primitive in their[Pg 238] tastes, but sincere and earnest; and I am led to the belief that the course has another point of similarity with Blackheath, being the oldest now in existence on the American continent. It is said that a daughter of old Tom Morris, who married a Mr. Hunter and went to America, was largely responsible for the beginning of golf at Quebec. Men and boys were playing on it on this beautiful Sunday morning when the bells in countless steeples of Quebec and at St. Levis on the other side of the St. Lawrence were ringing their music through the stillest air. I sat down on the edge of the course overlooking the precipitous depths to the river, far down below, where the smoke from a warship at anchor came lazily from the funnels, and looked for long

enough to gain an undying impression of one of the grandest panoramas in the world, seen at its most peaceful and its best. Nature had a grand inspiration when she made Quebec as now we find her.

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This marvellous country is a rare place for making the new beginning. Everything is so raw, so suggestive, so encouraging to earnest failures who would, like Omar, if they could, conspire with fate, shatter the existing scheme of things and "remould it nearer to the heart's desire." Canada is indeed a fine place for hope for the future. I met several men in the country who told me, that on leaving England and Scotland, they had perforce, with all the hard work before them, to give up the game for a long period; while another reason was, that those having been much earlier days, there were fewer courses there. So years after, when the fortunes had been made, they came back to golf again, and they were making another new beginning, and felt a certain gladness as they remembered some of the [Pg 239] faults and the torments of the old game with all its vast imperfections. In everything they would start over again as if it were all quite new, and they knew nothing about it. Generally they have made successes of their second golfing lives on earth in this way, but yet they have found that they needed to act warily and be on their guard always against old enemies, for golf poisons are marvellously subtle and enduring things; and it has been found that when once a man contracts a habit that is bad it will last for ever, whether he plays the game continually or not, and the worse the habit the more incurable it is. The best that can be done is the application of a system of subjection, by which the disease is kept under, and does not pain or hinder. But men who have fallen into bad and hopeless complications with their golf, and found that it never could be improved any more, have tried to begin it all over again as left handers—the most drastic change—and even that has failed. They have then realised that the only way to die happy is to give up the game for a matter of half a generation and start again, with the determination to keep the head still, to begin the back-swing with the wrists, and not to start pivoting on the left toe as soon as the driving is begun, as if it were necessary to do this thing, as so many of the teachers have suggested, to the ruin of their pupils, for the unsteadiness it has produced. One learns to do this pivoting after an hour's practice at the game, and can pivot well when nothing else can be done at golf. But it takes years and years sometimes to get rid of such a stupid custom. The left heel must rise, but let it rise as little as may be, and of its own accord. Its rising should be always a result of something, and not a cause of something else.

What is needed at a beginning, or a fresh start in any golfing life, is a thorough grasp of essential principles. [Pg 240] Considering the subject the whole way through, we may feel that there are really only two essential and compulsory principles applicable to all cases, instead of two hundred or more as the bewildered player is often led to imagine. These two are, first, that the eye must be kept upon the ball until it has left the club; and, second, that in addition to the still head there must be one fixed and practically motionless centre in the human system while the stroke is being made. It is neglect, generally accidental, of one or both of these principles that causes most of the bad shots that are made. Let us remember that. Never, or hardly ever, should we neglect these principles, and if we do not our handicap is almost sure to come down, not only because so many bad shots will be avoided, but because the exactness, certainty, and quality of all the strokes will be steadily improved as they cannot be when hampered by neglect of the principles. The eye makes the connection between the captain in the brain and the engineers of the physical system. It is the speaking-tube or the telegraph apparatus. There can be no union without it. But, as we all know, it is not such an easy thing to keep the eye on the ball as it ought to be kept on it, and the more anxious the player the more liable is he to err in this matter. As to the fixed centre—somewhere in the interior of the waist—we should reflect that the golfing swings, when carried out properly, consist of the action and movements of thousands of different muscles, operating in different ways, different directions, and at different times. Perfect harmony and correlation among them all is necessary if the general result is to be smooth and exact. Make no mistake about it, the golfing swing, with all its complications and the acute precision that is necessary for its good and proper effect, is one of the most wonderful things of which the physical system is capable. When I reflect upon [Pg 241] it I think it is marvellous that the human man can make it as he does. To obtain harmony among all these thousands of movements there must be one centre from which they are all regulated. If we think it out we see that this is so, and then we appreciate the importance of what is too baldly described as keeping the body still, as we have perhaps never done before. As a point of truth, the body as a whole cannot be kept still, but there must be one centre that must be fixed from the moment that the club addresses the ball until the latter has left its place after impact. The captain in the brain, the eye, and the fixed head and centre are the great trinity who manage the whole concern. Only one man who has neglected this law has ever raised himself to eminence in golf, and that man is Edward Ray, who has done it by mere physical strength. When the fixed centre is held secure a great host of evils which constantly cause failure are avoided—swaying of the body, collapse of the legs, improper foot work, dropping of the right shoulder, falling forward, and more of such a kind of fatal faults.

In the biggest dictionary that I can find neither the word "futurism" nor "cubist" is given a place, and yet these words, meaning certain movements, are probably on the tongues of art folks with much frequency in these times. In the same way the word "subconsciousism" and "subconsciousist" are not in this or any other dictionary; but they may yet be coined and made legitimate to fill certain vacancies, and they represent definite golfing systems. The principle of subconsciousism in essence, then, is that of showing a visionary picture to the mind for a moment, banishing it, and, in a certain measure, forgetting all about it, and then going[Pg 242] on with the game as if the incident had been closed. But the mind retains its record more or less vaguely always; and the picture thrown on the mental screen makes an impression there which stays; and that impression is an influence upon the succeeding physical actions. Subconsciously the player does something—it may be little or much—to imitate the movements in the mental picture that he saw. He cannot avoid it; the influence upon him cannot be wholly resisted. If, as it were, he saturates his mind with impressions of this kind, of the strokes he would like to play, of the way he would like to play them, he will gradually and almost surely begin to play them just like that. It has been recognised for ages that the best golf is that which is played entirely subconsciously, that is to say without conscious effort, and without thinking in detail of the stroke that has to be played. When a man is "on his game" he has none of this thinking to do, and does none. There seems to be only one way of playing the shot, and that way is unavoidable to him and quite natural. He does not need to shuffle about to find his proper stance, and he is not anxious about any part of his swing. The moment a clear consciousness of detailed action asserts itself, and the man does think about the movements of his swing, and does shuffle about for his stance, he goes off his game, and the stronger the consciousness the more he goes off. These points are disputed by nobody. A little while since a new writer on the game declared that the golfer at the beginning of his swing thought of the advice of one professional; half way up he thought of the suggestion of another; at the top he remembered the recommendation of a third man; and coming down, the hint of a fourth flung itself into a mind that must have been working with amazing rapidity in the most difficult circumstances. What the result of such strokes is was[Pg 243] not suggested; but if any number of golfers carried out their scheme of swinging in this way we should know exactly why it is that so much bad golf is played. As a matter of truth nobody has ever been able to mix up his plans in such a manner; but the statement suggests the extreme of consciousness, and fear with it also. With subconsciousness there is no fear, no hesitation, and no doubt.

Now we can show how our subconsciousism, when unaided and not encouraged (there is nearly but not quite a contradiction in terms here), has had its effect upon the player hitherto. If a man watches the play of any golfer much better than himself, say a first-class professional, very closely for some time he takes a little of that man's style into his own system without knowing it, and, it may be, without making any conscious effort to imitate it. He is much more likely to succeed in this way than by making any deliberate attempt to copy. Again, you will often find players telling you, that after a week of watching a championship meeting, and without having paid attention to any player in particular, certainly without attempting to imitate any one, they find on resuming their own game that a new influence is upon it; that in particular they address the ball in a more businesslike way, with more confidence; that their swing is less flabby, and that they play their iron shots with much greater sense of wrist, and with more firmness. This has been noticed over and over again, and it is a most interesting result of the influence of impressions involuntarily recorded on the mind. Consider another way in which the impression acts. A player may be removed from the game through illness or some other reason for a time, and during that period he works some of the problems of golf out in his mind, and constantly pictures a new and[Pg 244] particular way of playing a stroke that has troubled him. When he returns to the links he plays the stroke like that without any effort to do so, or perhaps without even thinking of it. Another remarkable example of subconsciousism was afforded to me recently by a good golfer, who said that to develop a certain stroke which he had found beyond his best efforts—conscious efforts—he had three enlarged photographs made of that stroke as executed properly by a first-class man, one showing the beginning, the other the top of the swing, and the third the finish. He had these pictures placed alongside each other on one of the walls of his room, and there they were all the time, not to be avoided. He made no effort to study them, but his mind simply absorbed them, and then subconsciously he found the stroke coming to him until in the end he played it just like that. In these matters subconsciousism is shown to be at work without being understood or at all suspected.

Having this valuable agency at command the next thing is to apply it, and make it of more thorough practical effect without permitting it to change to interfering and dangerous consciousness. In the cases that have already been cited certain methods are plainly suggested. Here is another which has, as I know, proved amazingly effective at times. The player, we may say, is not driving as well as he should, or in the way he would like to do. At the moment of taking his place on the teeing-ground he runs through his mind, as it were, a cinematographic picture of his favourite model player doing the drive. He sees, in imagination, the man taking his stance, swinging the club back, down on to the ball again, and finishing. He just sees it once, and bothers about it no

more. Then he sets about his own drive without any further reference to the mental picture that his mind has [Pg 245] absorbed. The mind does the rest. The drive may not be made in the ideal way that was imagined. It may be done in the old way. It may even be fozzled. But there has been an influence at work, and if that influence is always employed in the same way the good result will come in time, always provided—and this is important—that the model is one that is suitable to the player, and can be copied by him. It would be useless for a man who is far past forty, very fat and very short, with no athletic quality in him at all, to take Harry Vardon and his graceful lithesome swing for his mental cinema show.

Another way in which practical subconsciousism may be made exceedingly valuable is by imagining a place to which the ball has to be delivered without looking at it when it ought not to be looked at, as when a very short running or pitching approach has to be made. The very best of men often find it impossible to keep the eye fixed on the ball until the stroke is done. A little while since there was the case of one of the finest amateur golfers of the time flopping his ball into the bunker guarding the green of the first hole at Sandwich from the bank thereof, when, if he had played an easy shot and kept his eye at rest, he would almost certainly have avoided this trouble, and then won the St. George's Cup for which he was playing. I remember an exactly similar case in the final of the Amateur Championship of 1908, at Sandwich, when Mr. Lassen, who did win, knocked his ball into the big bunker in front of the old tenth green there from the top of the cliff overlooking it. What is needed in such cases, or in like cases when presented to inferior players, is something to keep the mind's eye contented, and it has been found to serve if a picture of the hole is flashed into the mind just before the stroke is made. This is what is certainly done, though unintentionally, [Pg 246] when putting. The man does keep his eye on the ball when making his stroke this time; but yet it is most desirable that his mind should retain a very clear and exact impression of the place where the hole is, the distance of it, and the features of the green in between. In other games that may be compared with golf, the player has his eye on the object at the moment of striking; in billiards the very last glance is given at the object ball, and the eye is on it at the moment the stroke is made. That is because the player is sure of his way of striking, as in putting he is not. If you try a method of putting which was once attempted by some players, but was severely and properly discountenanced by the authorities, of lying down on the green and putting with the end of the club, billiard fashion, you will find that then the eye is on the hole when the stroke is made. In golf, the player's eye being wanted for the ball, a last look is given at the hole, and the picture of it is kept on the mind when the stroke is being made, and it influences the application of strength more than the player often realises.

This application of strength is always done subconsciously, and here again there is a part of professional teaching which does not recognise the fact when it ought to do. The teachers tell us that to strike the ball a certain distance with an iron, the club chosen should be swung back to a certain point, that to get twenty yards more it should be swung upwards so many more inches or degrees, for a farther distance so much more swing should be made, and so on, throwing the onus of swinging the proper distance on to the conscious effort of the player. By a moment's thought it will be realised that players do not consciously regulate the lengths of their swings in this way, that they could not do so, and that any deliberate stopping of their swing at a certain carefully calculated point would be ruinous [Pg 247] to the stroke in hand. What is done is, that an estimate of the distance to which the ball has to travel is made; this is taken into the mind, and the mind, having much experience, influences the swing so that it is quite subconsciously made of the proper length, or at all events the length that the mind suggested. In this way the swing is certainly made short for short shots, and longer as the greater distance is needed; but it is wrong to suggest that the matter is carefully and consciously arranged by the player. The truth is that not one player in a thousand could tell you, when about to make a swing with an iron club, exactly how far he intends to swing, or having made the shot successfully, how far he did swing. His mind subconsciously arranged the whole affair.

An interesting case was quoted to me some time since of the success a man achieved in lofting over stymies, and the reason why. This person never seemed to miss. He related that he found previously that his failures were due to looking at the other ball too much when in the act of making the stroke. He then found that he succeeded frequently when he did not look at either that ball or his own but at the hole itself. Doing this enabled him to carry his club through, failure to do which is the chief cause of missing these shots. But he did not altogether believe in this system, which seemed dangerous, and he compromised by keeping his eye fixed on his own ball, but at the same time imagining the hole and seeing mentally his ball dropping into it. Since then his success has been wonderful. In much the same way and by the same principle it will be found that the best way in the world to encourage a good follow-through, and to stop jerky hitting with wooden clubs, is to look at the ball properly and yet imagine it a couple of inches farther on.

The principles of this subconsciousism suggest one [Pg 248] earnest recommendation to the player who is bent on making a change in a faulty or ineffectual style, and it is that such change is better brought about gradually and in the way of a coaxing influence rather than by a quick drastic alteration. Thus the player whose swing is too

upright and who wants to obtain a flatter one, or he who desires to change from a long swing to a short one, or the other way about; or again he who would bring the ball more over to the right foot (one of the most difficult of all changes to make for a player accustomed to have it nearly opposite the left toe, but a desirable one in these days when the rubber-cored ball shows no disinclination to rise as the gutty did); all these players would do better to make their changes slowly and gradually and by way of subconscious influence. If the ball is moved three inches to the right all at once the entire swing is upset and the whole driving arrangement is likely to go to pieces. But when done in the other way the gradual change is not noticed, and when the ball gets to the desired position it would be as difficult to play it from the old one, as the new one would have been, if assumed suddenly. It is sometimes said of golf that the most exasperating part of the whole thing is, that the more you try to succeed in it the more you fail. There is more truth in that sad reflection than may have been fancied, and a fine moral in it too. To "try" in this case means to make conscious effort.

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After all, in this teaching about subconsciousism we are merely going back again to Nature, to simplicity, and to an original idea that there is undeveloped golf in all of us just because all the movements of the game are so natural, and natural because they are so true and rhythmical. In everything Nature encourages always[Pg 249] the best in a man, and she likes most the graceful movement, the perfect poise, the equal balance. The easier, the more natural, and the more rhythmical our movements are in golf the more successful will be the efforts always. The undeveloped golf is always in the system, and with fair encouragement or a hint that is sufficiently obvious the instinct will surely lead a young subject to its cultivation on good lines. Man when old becomes awkward and contrary, and so the aggravations of the game arise.

I have always maintained that if we placed a young boy who had never seen or heard of golf on a desert island and left him there with means for his subsistence for a few years, together with a set of golf clubs and a few boxes of balls, the people who might be wrecked on those lonely shores thereafter would find him playing a good scratch game and in want of nothing but a caddie, for which part the arriving boatswain might be indicated. But these wrecked misers, with their shiverings and their grumblings, would jar unpleasantly upon the happy peace of this purely natural golfing youth, in all the ecstasy of the discovery of his own world. Probably he would wish the others—all except the boatswain—to leave him there when a white sail of relief was seen upon the horizon. A pretty speculation arises instantly. Suppose at the same time we had placed upon another desert island four thousand miles away another raw child, innocent of the simplest, vaguest thought of what golf is or could be, and left him also with clubs and balls and directions for obtaining fresh meat and fresh water when the human desires in food were felt. He would surely take to the game in the same way as the other boy did, practise it and probe into its mysteries with just the same enthusiasm, would become a good scratch player also, and would probably make use of the same simple expression of condemnation[Pg 250] when a shipload of people uncivilised to golf were wrecked that way. But here is the point: this second scratch desert-island boy would probably be just as good as the first scratch desert-island boy, no better and no worse, and if they were to play for the Championship of the Most Lonely Islands, nothing is more likely than that their excellent match would have to go to the thirty-seventh hole or beyond it. They would, being good material to begin with, attain approximately equal results so far as playing the holes in a certain number of strokes is concerned, and each youth's system would be perfect for himself, but between the two there would be the very widest differences, and the basic principles that were common to the games of both players would be so encrusted with masses of individual detail and coloured with temperamental attitude that they would be scarcely discernible.

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[Pg 251]

## CHAPTER X

### GOLF DE PARIS, AND SOME REMARKABLE EVENTS AT VERSAILLES AND CHANTILLY, WITH NEW THEORIES BY HIGH AUTHORITIES.



In front of the red brick club-house of the Royal Liverpool Golf Club at Hoylake, a citadel which by its tower and clock commemorates the great achievements of Hoylake's famous son, John Ball, there was assembled late in the afternoon of Friday, the 21st of June 1907 (being the forty-seventh year of the Open Championship), a large gathering of golfing persons who by their speech and demeanour suggested some of the vivid unrealities of a stage crowd near the footlights. They had a self-conscious and somewhat artificial bearing towards each other. They muttered and beckoned. They gave the impression of being a little uneasy and nervous. Friends among them who essayed to conduct a conversation found themselves at a loss for appropriate comments upon what had happened and made remarks which had no clear or relevant meaning. Professor Paterson, wearing the red rosette, came from the house and stood before the little table bearing a silver cup which had been held by the line of champions all the way from the time of Morris, the younger, and a familiar friendly figure in chequered garments moved about in a manner of official preparation. What had happened[Pg 252] had indeed been dramatic; but the drama had had the living circumstance of full reality. We could not discuss constructions and readings, and suggest other endings. Here was the one gross fact, that Arnaud Massy, a Basque, the professional attached to the leading club of Paris, a strong bonily built man with no British blood in his being, had just made himself the possessor for the year of that historic championship cup, which hitherto had never been taken out of the United Kingdom. This was something which the gathering did with difficulty absorb into their golfing minds. They were good sportsmen, and they cheered because they knew that this Massy was a fine fellow and a good champion; but it was all a little dream-like, and there was a spell that needed to be broken.

Massy, the victor, with a big smiling face came forward. The gold medal was delivered to him. There was a little silence, a few muttered incoherent words, and then this splendid Massy threw up his hands into the air and shouted out with a full blast from his lusty lungs, "Vive l'entente cordiale!" The tensivity was broken; the people cheered easily, naturally, and whole heartedly; they accepted Massy as the true and proper successor to James Braid in the Open Championship, and wished him thoroughly well—even though he were a Frenchman or a Basque. He had done the right thing.

This foreign player (never forgetting that he was trained to the game at Biarritz, which in golf is mostly British, though it lies under the laws of France) was brought to England and Scotland by Sir Everard Hambro, and was improved in golf at North Berwick with Ben Sayers assisting him. He well deserved to win that championship, and it should not be overlooked that, so to say, he has confirmed his victory by making a tie for the championship again since then. He is the[Pg 253] only man outside the great triumvirate who has done so much as twice to reach the top of the list in modern times. He was well on his own very good game. There was a crispness about his play with his wooden clubs that indicated the man who for the time being had full confidence and could hit his hardest. And Massy's putting, especially in the case of the most difficult and fateful of all putts, those of from five to nine feet—putts for the missing of which there is the fullest excuse, for whose holing there is enormous gain—had been splendid for a long time before and was most excellent then. At those putts of the kind I remark upon I do not think that Massy in accuracy or confidence has his equal in the world. He strokes the ball into the hole as though it were the simplest thing to do; easily and gracefully he putts it in. In other ways he makes a fine figure of a golfer. Military training in France has given him a stiffer, straighter build than most great golfers have, for this game tends a little to a crouching gait and posture. Massy marches from the tee to the ball that has gone before with a quick, regular step of the right-left-right military way, and when he comes up with the ball he does a right wheel round, presents his club, and plays his second with a quickness and lack of hesitation in which he is second only to George Duncan. Particularly in putting is Massy a man of inspirations and quick impulse. And I must not now forget that there is in the world a charming little lady who is called Mlle. Hoylake Massy, which is her proper name. Providence is disposed often to be kind and generous to the strong and those who have well deserved, and that week Mme. Massy gave to the man who was even then making himself the champion a sweet little daughter. Having won the championship, the next question was one of christenings, and, said Massy to[Pg 254] his wife, "Voilà! Surely she shall be called our little Hoylake!" Which she was accordingly, Mme. Massy, rejoicing in her husband's success, like the good, happy little woman of Scotland that she is, having cordially agreed.

And in France there were rejoicings among the golfers. My friend, M. Pierre Deschamps, fine and keen sportsman (and the "father of golf in France," as we call him for the grand work he has done in establishing the game so well at La Bouliè, where he is president of the Société de Golf de Paris, and encouraging it with all his heart and energy elsewhere in his country), rose and made a remarkable declaration that golf was to be the "national game of France." The national game of France, our Scottish golf of English development, started, as some still will have it, in Holland, played in some sort of way as *jeu de mail* even in France, practised in Pekin, called the "national game" also, as I have heard it, in America—now it was to be naturalised and made the "national game of France!" Ubiquitous golf indeed! M. Deschamps, whose words are careful if they are quick, as befits one who is in the diplomatic service of his country, sat down and wrote an essay on golf in general, and Massy's success in particular, and, addressing the new champion as if he were before him, said: "Et maintenant à

vous la parole, mon cher Massy; continuez votre brillante carrière, jouissez de votre belle gloire dont nous sommes tous fiers, comme Golfeurs et comme Français; à cette heure, où tant de links s'ouvrent chez nous, pour répondre aux besoins d'enthousiastes sportsmen, puissent d'autres professionnels de notre race suivre votre exemple, unique encore dans les fastes du 'Royal and Ancient Game,' et contribuer à faire de ce sport un jeu national dans notre beau pays de France!" That was written. In[Pg 255] victory you may be magnanimous, and M. Deschamps at this time would graciously waive all questions of origins and growths; he must have felt that then it mattered little that a kind of golf called *chole* had been played ages back by the people of the north, and that it was possible the Scots had copied from them. It was enough that Arnaud Massy was "le Champion du monde."

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Disregarding all those doubts about the *jeu de mail* and the game of *chole*, and considering only the real thing as we know it, taking its time from the stone temple by the Fifeshire sea, it was away back in 1856 that the game was first played on the soil of France, and that was in the south by the Pyrenees at Pau. Yet at that time only the wintering British were concerned. Forty years went on before the French themselves made a fair beginning with the game. In 1896 the Société de Golf de Paris was established, and it has been a splendid success. To-day in prestige and influence it stands for the headquarters of the game in the country, though since it was begun there have sprung up many clubs of great pretensions, with good courses, nice club-houses, distinguished memberships, and unlimited francs. Yet La Boulie holds her queenship still. Excellent golfing places have been made at Chantilly, Le Pecq, Compiègne, Fontainebleau. Out on the north-west coast at such resorts as Le Touquet, Dieppe, Deauville and Wimereux by Boulogne the game is established. Long years back I played at pretty open Wimereux when there was but a nine-holes course there, and not the excellent one of eighteen that has now been made. Shall it not be considered as a happy token that golf links are commonly found on old battlefields and at places where armies have[Pg 256] encamped? Sometimes this is just because the soldiers play the game when they are abroad; sometimes it is because entrenchments are bunkers all prepared; but oftenest it is just coincidence. Whatever it be or why, it is the fact that there is golf where armies and battles have been in Egypt, in South Africa, in the United States and Canada, and at many places. Where there was the fury of flying shells there is now only the peaceful hum of the rubber ball. One recalled when first at Wimereux that here the great Napoleon had encamped with his grand army, the same as was to cross the Channel to defiant isles and make a conquest of them. But playing neither the first hole nor the last do we need any reminder of what great Bonaparte wished to do, for by us there towers aloft the monument that he had erected to that successful invasion of Albion that never did take place. Hereabouts is indicated the place where the master-general in full satisfaction with the progress of things, and in remembrance of great achievements, distributed his military favours. And here all along are deep grass-covered trenches, and larger, rounder, shallow pits that once might have been kitchens or stables. All these that now are bunkers and hazards are where Napoleon camped and waited. And on a fine day our white-cliffed Albion is in full view. Sometimes there may even be a sigh as one reflects that the Corsican little dreamt of what should be done with his camping land when a hundred years were gone, that those sportsmen of Britishers would be playing their game about there, taking their divots and holing their putts, and striving for golden tokens given for competition by the mayor and municipality of adjacent Boulogne! It was not for no reason that Arnaud Massy called aloud "Vive l'entente cordiale!" In the heart of the country there have been more golf clubs and courses formed, and[Pg 257] they are supported now mostly by the French. At Rouen and Rheims the game may now be enjoyed. It is spreading. M. Deschamps may yet be soundly justified. And indeed when we take our clubs to Paris we feel that he should, and heartily do wandering players echo the cry of Massy, who by his victory signalled the fact that French golf had grown from babyhood to the strength of independence, and was now to be considered as an entity. There is a subtle sweetness about a golfing expedition in Paris that there is about a little holiday for the game at no other place. One is not here suggesting that it is better for golf and other matters to go to Paris than elsewhere, only that it is quite different, intensely enjoyable, and easily convenient. We breakfast in comfort in London, read the newspaper afterwards, go through the pack of clubs to see that the roll-call is rightly answered, and with time enough for everything move along to Victoria. Had we dawdled less we might have gone much earlier from Charing Cross. We meet quite casually other golfers in our compartment on the South-Eastern, and inquire with no astonishment as to which of the Parisian courses will be scarred by their irons before their trip is done. From Dover or Folkestone we have a quick and comfortable crossing; we discover some people who are bound for Le Touquet and tell us of the excellent changes there, and then on the comfortable railway of the Nord we are swung happily into the heart of France, and are in the capital before the sun has set on a summer's day, and with time yet to go out to La Boulie, which is by Versailles, or Chantilly, and stretch our English arms and legs in preparation for matches of the morrow. We are at home as golfers without delay.

What one feels about golfing in Paris now is that while there is always that elevation of the spirits, that[Pg 258] sense of extra life, that little superfineness of feeling that are induced by a sojourn in the capital by those who

feel themselves somewhat akin to her, and there is a certain subtle difference in the golfing ways and systems, such as we not merely find but wish for, golf at Paris and the world over is really very much the same—the same not merely in the playing of the shots as in the general scheme of things, the going and the coming, the *tout ensemble*. We settle ourselves comfortably in a big hotel in the Rue de Castiglione, and next morning we fling away the sheets before eight as alive as any Parisian *ouvrier*. The *café complet* disposed of, the next question is that of clubs and balls. If it is a fine day and there is time for the walking, we may stride through the corner of the gardens of the Tuileries, across the corresponding corner of the Place de la Concorde, over the bridge and into the station to the left by the side of the Seine and down the steps to the platform, where there always awaits us at the most convenient time what is in essence largely a golfers' train. Our golfing people are in full evidence. You cannot mistake their kind in a train of France any more than you can when they journey from Charing Cross to Walton Heath. They pervade. So on to the other end of the journey at Versailles, and there the carriages await us, and the brake for those who like it, and we are bowled and rattled along through that place which has seen much of the makings and undoings of France, and on to La Boulie, where we hasten to the first tee, fearful of any waiting. Or, alternatively, we take a taxi-cab that is outside the hotel in Paris, and let loose through the Parisian streets with it, across the Place Vendôme, past the Opera, away along to the Gare du Nord with our inimitable Parisian taxi-man hurtling round the corners with all the fury of a charioteer in the races of ancient Rome, making us[Pg 259] reflect that it is well there will be a rest of an hour before being called upon to do the first putting at Chantilly. So we perceive that the going and the coming are very much what they might be in England, with just that difference that gives a piquancy, while, after a day on the course, it is found to be quite excellent to have the gaiety of Paris at one's disposal. Those who have tried it generally agree that golf de Paris makes the finest change of the game, the most exhilarating that may be had by the player of the south of England, who is not too far removed from Charing Cross or one of the ports. It may be 444 miles from our metropolis to St. Andrews, and 383 to North Berwick, but it is only 259 to Paris, and despite the sea the journey lasts a much shorter time than the dash to the north by the fastest trains. We do not compare the golf of Paris with the golf of our historic and beloved seats of the game, but the courses of France, as inland courses, are good, and we think again of the virtues of the change complete, of the *tout ensemble*. Good things have come out of France in the days of long ago and in recent times; golf that is nearly of the best order rises in it now, and when we see Mr. Edward Blackwell and some others of the great men of the auld grey city who are most particular about all golfing things playing themselves on the slopes of La Boulie, over the plains of Chantilly, and through the forest of Fontainebleau, we know that things are moving tolerably well.

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Upon our initiation at La Boulie, our curiosity is stirred and attention is attracted to many things. Perhaps M. Deschamps, or such a good sportsman as the Baron de Bellet—whose son, M. François de Bellet, has won the Amateur Championship of France, while Mlle.[Pg 260] de Bellet is the best of the lady players in the country—would conduct a guest about the place and show him many things that would interest him, and many more that as a golfer he would most honestly admire. La Boulie is not a great course despite all the championships that have been played upon it, but the Société de Golf de Paris, which has a membership of 750 at a subscription of about £10, is quite a great institution. Yet, let me hasten to say that in the first remark I was judging La Boulie on the highest inland standard, and even then the judgment must be qualified by the statement that if not great in the best sense La Boulie is good and is quite interesting. At one time it suffered much from the nature of its soil and turf, but greenkeeping science, the francs of France, and the loving and most assiduous care of M. Deschamps, have changed much if not all of that. In the summer time it is quite one of the most beautiful courses I can think of with its wealth of trees, in which the nightingales sing soon after the golfers have done, and its majestic undulations, which come so near to being mountainous that herein, with so much climbing to be done and so many uphill and downhill shots, is one of the greatest faults of the course. But everything is well done at La Boulie, and human ingenuity and thoroughness are well applied. M. Deschamps is a fine humanitarian, and exerts himself constantly for the welfare of the caddies, who are as good for their business as any caddies in the world. It was a happy idea on his part to have these boys trained under a semi-military system as he has them now. They are all housed in a building near to the first tee under the care of the club; they have to observe regulations of duty and life which are good for them, and they are dressed in a boy-scout khaki uniform with touches of red to brighten it, and the principles of boy-scoutism are worked into their[Pg 261] young lives. This is excellent, and indeed it is the truth that already we have a little to learn in golf from France. By the way, one of the curious laws of the country—curious as it seems to us, though soundly sensible—is that boys are not allowed, when under about fifteen years of age, to carry more than a certain weight in the way of work, and this prohibits caddies from carrying a bag of clubs of more than fair extent. As a matter of detail you will find that the weight quantity allowed works out to something like ten clubs of an average mixture, but happily for some good friends of mine there is no weighing at the first tee and no officers of the Republic there to see it done. They threaten to arrest us at St. Andrews if we play the game with iron clubs only, and they have the power

through bye-laws ratified by Government to do so and send us to prison. Is it possible that a wandering player in happy France should be lodged in a modern Bastille for that on one eager day he defied ill omen and the law by carrying thirteen clubs in his bag, as both James Braid and Edward Ray have done when winning championships, the weight limit being exceeded and all the unhappiest consequences following? M. Deschamps took the initiative in founding the Golf Union of France, which is based completely on the American system and is likely to be a strong force in the golf of the future.

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To the best of my knowledge they have only one plus-handicap amateur in France, being M. François de Bellet, who is rated at plus 1 at two or three clubs, but I have examined the handicap books at different places and find that there are a few scratch men, and that the number of players who have single figure handicaps is quite good in proportion to the whole, and is increasing.[Pg 262] The fears we had that the French temperament was not good for the game prove to be unfounded; while the French enthusiasm is equal to anything that we know. There are cases of golf fever in France that are every degree as bad—or as good—as those we find here at home.

One muggy winter morning, when a friend and I teed up at the beginning of the round at La Boulie, we could with difficulty see the flag on the first green, short as was the hole. We surmised that we might be the only players; but, no, many holes ahead, having started early, was a match going on between a baron of France and one of his rivals. The baron was taking the game with exceeding seriousness, and the information was given to me that he played two rounds on the course every day of his life. "Saturdays and Sundays?" I asked my caddie. "Toujours!" was the answer. "Even if it rains?" I pursued. "Toujours!" the boy answered with emphasis. "Or snows or is foggy?" I persisted, and then the carrier of clubs replied a little impatiently and with finality, "Toujours!" intending to convey that in all circumstances whatsoever the indefatigable baron played his two rounds a day, and independent witnesses confirmed the statement of the boy. This surely is the French counterpart of what is considered to be the finest case of golf enthusiasm that Britain has produced, being that of old Alexander M'Kellar who played on Bruntsfield Links in the brave days of old and was known for his ardour as "the Cock o' the Green." He also would play always; when snow covered the course he begged and implored some one to become his opponent in a match, and if nobody obliged he would go out alone and wander the whole way round, playing his ball from flag to flag, the greens and holes being hidden. At night he would sometimes play at the short holes by the dim glimmer of a lamp, and golf by moonlight was[Pg 263] his frequent experience. Once upon a time his suffering wife thought to shame him by taking to the links his dinner and his nightcap; but he was too busy to attend to her. M'Kellar is long since dead, but something of his soul survives in England—and in France. And there are old and experienced golfers in France. There are Parisians who are members of the Royal and Ancient Club of St. Andrews, and I have met others who could argue most deeply with me upon the peculiarities and merits of many British courses from Sandwich and Sunningdale to Montrose and Cruden Bay. I took tea at Fontainebleau with M. le Comte de Puyfontaine, who exercises a kind of governorship over the course, and he told me that he learned his golf twenty-three years ago at a place near Lancaster, and that since then he has played in many parts of the United States and elsewhere.

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I have endeavoured to make the point that the French are worthy and thorough, that the Parisian golf and golfers must be taken seriously, and that it is a pleasure to go among them with our clubs. Their courses are nearly good enough for anything, and they are all different from each other in type and characteristics. Fontainebleau is cut out of the forest, and silver birches line the fairway, while some of the great boulders which are peculiar to the place stand out as landmarks near the putting greens—but not so near as to be useful to the erratic player. Holes of all kinds are at Fontainebleau, and some of them make pretty puzzles in the playing. The teeing ground for the third is high up on a hill and the view is charming, but that may be of less account than the circumstance that the carry is farther than it looks, and the hole is a long one. The fifth is a catchy dog-leg hole, which the caddies of[Pg 264] Fontainebleau do not call a *jambe du chien*, as you might expect them, but a "doc-lac." Soon the game will be Gallicised completely. The ninth, being a drive and a peculiar pitch, is a strange hole which worries the pair of us exceedingly. It looks one of the simplest things, but there is an inner green and an outer one, as one might say, and the former is on a high plateau. There is a secret about it which we did not discover in three full days. The tenth is a fine long hole, with a guard to the green that might have been brought up from the Inferno, and so on to the end in great variety. I like Fontainebleau. Chantilly has less character but more length. It is a better test of wooden club play, but not of pretty work with the irons in approaching. Yet it is well bunkered, the fairway is smooth and dry, as it is at Fontainebleau, all through the winter, and the putting greens are most excellent, fast and true. If most parts of the course are a little flat, there is a great ravine about the middle of it

which gives a touch of the romantic and helps to the enjoyment. The turf at La Boulie does not winter so well as it does at the other places, though the club has spent many thousands of francs in applying real sea-sand to it for its improvement; but in the spring, the summer, and the autumn, golf here at Versailles is a fine pleasure. Yet some will say that, much as I tempt them, they would not after all go to France for golf, that indeed they could never confess to others that they had been to Fontainebleau and Versailles and Chantilly for their game. But why may they not take their game and their historical views and reflections on the same days, as they may do better in France than elsewhere; though when we play at St. Andrews or at Sandwich, where Queen Bess visited, and Westward Ho! we wonder again how strangely this royal and ancient game does attach itself and cling to the old places of celebrity, and especially those whose[Pg 265] fame was made for them by kings. It is curious. The keen golfer is a man of thought and sense. We play on a morning at Fontainebleau, and in the afternoon we wander through the rich galleries of the wonderful palace where many kings of France held magnificent court, a place where the great Napoleon loved to rest a while between campaigns. There are relics of the Emperor in many chambers; and it was at the chief entrance here that he bade his last good-bye to the old guard and went lonely away, an emperor no more. The wonders and the glories of Versailles are known even to those who have never crossed the Channel; Chantilly has had its great romances of history also. The old castle was put up in the ninth century; here the Condes lived in fine state, and in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the place was very famous. The good French have endeavoured to make their courses suit their places. Sometimes we seem to look even on these playgrounds for a touch of art, a little delicacy, a fineness and a high quality, and we think in just that way of the golf de Paris when the train of the Nord runs us homewards again.

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The seaside golf in the northern and north-western parts of France is coming to be an important thing in the general scheme. Personal association and its seniority above all except Dieppe have led me already to mention Wimereux, but the golf of Wimereux is not the queen of the game of northern seaside France. In all honesty we must crown the slightly younger Le Touquet, on the other side of Boulogne, with that distinction. Here you may have one of the most charming changes of the game, and the most wholesome, delightful rearrangement of your general daily living system. Go to Etaples from Boulogne, then spin[Pg 266] in the car through that splendid forest, skimming by Paris Plage and its casinos and evidences of lightness of life, and so through to Touquet, where there is a course for golf that is most excellent in every respect, lengths and character of holes, sandy nature of soil, quality of putting greens—everything. Some of the holes are a little tricky; but the course in general has been enormously improved in recent times, and it well deserves the championship dignity that has now been accorded to it. The girl caddies there are the best of their kind. I remember a little Marie for such an intuition regarding clubs to be used as I remember no other assistant: and after playing for a day through these avenues of fir trees with the great banks of silver sand in the distance, shutting off the sea, then dawdling among the coloured lights at Paris Plage listening to the music after dinner, and in the night sleeping in an upper room near to the links, and hearing at the last moment of consciousness the wind music floating in from the surrounding trees, one feels that this is almost an enchanted land, with the spirits of happiness and pleasure controlling a joyful cosmos.

Dieppe is good, and it is quite different. Here the golf is some seventeen years of age, the whole system of things is well matured and settled, and the golfing season goes along with a fine swing from the beginning to the end. It was Willie Park who first laid out this course, but it has been much altered and lengthened since then, and now there is a fine club-house and all that a player might wish for, and especially one who likes to contend in competitions. There is something for such challengers to do all the time; I know few other golfing places where there are so many competitions in August and September, and yet they are no nuisance to the people who say they hate such things. At Etretat the game has been making excellent[Pg 267] progress lately; at Deauville by Trouville, where you bathe always except when you do not golf or sleep or eat, it has been long established, and the course there has recently been raised very high in quality; and at Cabourg and Havre, in the same region, there are courses also. There are at Etretat thirteen holes, and yet you may play a lucky round, and I am reminded that in the long ago, when golf near the sands of Picardy was first being thought of, a wise man of Cabourg sent for an English course architect, and, displaying to his view one nice field, said, "Voila! Make me a hole! Two if possible!" But they know much better now than that, and Cabourg has its full eighteen. To golf, to lie down and sleep, to splash and tumble in the sea, to seem to do so much and yet to do so little except make a few drives and miss some putts—it is all a very happy holiday that you may enjoy at these places.

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The championships of France, which began in a small and gentle way, have lately risen to be very important events, and they gain a most wonderfully cosmopolitan entry. In 1913, which was the greatest year for championships in general that the game has ever known—Taylor winning his fifth Open at Hoylake, Mr. Hilton his fourth Amateur, Mr. Travers his fourth American Amateur, Ouimet beating Vardon and Ray in the American Open—the championships of France did indeed rise to the first class, and in both events, the Amateur at La Boulie and the Open which was held for the first time at Chantilly—and the first for it to be taken away from the mother course at Versailles—produced some most exciting business. I have never seen a more extraordinary final in its way than that in the amateur event at La Boulie on this occasion,[Pg 268] when Mr. E. A. Lassen came to grips with Lord Charles Hope—and such grips they were! I was led to describe it at the time as a dramatic affair of four periods and a spasm, and that is just what it was. Lord Charles Hope, though not physically strong, has acquired a fine game, and in the first period of this thirty-six holes match we witnessed him playing some quite beautiful golf and exercising the most complete self-possession and steadiness, gradually piling up a big lead of holes upon his more experienced opponent, who has been once Amateur Champion of Britain and a finalist another time, and seeming to make himself a certain winner. The duration of this period was one whole round, and at the end of it Lord Charles had five good holes to his advantage. The second was a period of peace, in which we watched Lord Charles keeping a tight hold on his most valuable gains, while Mr. Lassen, if losing nothing more, was gaining nothing when it was absolutely necessary he should be gaining quickly if he was not to be the loser of the day. Time was flying and holes were being done with, and fewer of them being left for play and recovery. This period terminated at the turn in the second round, with Lord Charles Hope still four to the good and "still winning." The third period lasted from the tenth to the fourteenth holes in this round, and in it the man who had seemed to be very well beaten threw a new life into his game, tightened it up, made it exact, certain, and aggressive, while at the same time his opponent seemed to collapse entirely, his driving becoming soft and uncertain and his short game nervous. The Yorkshire player won four of these five holes and at the fourteenth he was level with his man. Never was there a more extraordinary illustration of the truth that no match is lost until it is won; to some extent it recalled that amazing championship at Hoylake, when Mr. Sidney[Pg 269] Fry so nearly gained the title after being at one time, as it appeared, hopelessly beaten by Mr. Charles Hutchings. Now it was surely Mr. Lassen's match; but in the crisis Lord Charles Hope came again and fought every inch of the way home. In this period every hole was halved to the end of the round, so that after the statutory thirty-six had been played the state of things was as at the beginning of the day. No business had been done, and each man might be said to have had his tail up quite as much as the other. The spasm followed. The thirty-seventh had to be played. Mr. Lassen teed up his ball, said to himself that he must keep it to the left as there was the dread out-of-bounds on the right that had been a constant trouble to him, swung, struck, and to his dismay saw the little white ball bearing slowly but surely to the right after all. It did not reach the trees, but, almost as bad, it fell into the big deep bunker out that way, and made recovery difficult. Lord Charles Hope seized his advantage. A good ball shot straight down the middle of the fairway, and the hole and the match were his. An extraordinary game indeed that was.

In the Open Championship at Chantilly there was an entry that was nearly good enough for a championship on British soil. Vardon and Ray, out across the Atlantic, were missing, but otherwise the class was as numerous and good as need be, and there were a few of the best British amateurs. George Duncan won, as he had won the "News of the World" tournament the week before, and so made it clear that he had come into his own at last. These two were his first really big victories in classic open events, and they were brilliantly and indeed easily gained. But it was not Duncan's victory, so well deserved as it was, that makes this championship at Chantilly worth a place in golfing history. It was something else that very[Pg 270] nearly happened. Among the competitors was an amateur in Mr. H. D. Gillies, who at different times in recent seasons has shown an immense capacity. At St. Andrews in the Amateur Championship only a few months before he had made a brilliant display. Now, here, he did a thing which to the best of my belief and after a searching of all the records had never been done before, and that was in an open championship competition of the first order, decided by four rounds of stroke play and with the best players of the world arrayed against him, he as an amateur led the whole field for three consecutive rounds. Mr. Ouimet in America did not lead for three rounds, no amateur had led for three rounds in any open championship before, and it is not often that any professional has done so either. Mr. Gillies has enormous powers for concentration and effort, and, as one might say, he can strain himself at the game until he nearly drops. In his third round he had a wicked piece of bad luck which cost him two most valuable shots—not the sort of bad luck that one gets through finding a specially nasty place in a bunker, but the much worse variety which is the result of a grave error in course construction. After one of the finest drives one might wish to see, at a hole just after the turn he found his ball lying on a road which had to be treated as a hazard, and from here he was bunkered. He knew that Duncan was pressing him hard, and that he had not a stroke to spare. Still by an enormous effort he kept his lead, and at the end of the third round it looked as if it would still be a lead of two strokes, when alas! on the home green he lost a stroke in putting. Instead of having a lead of two over the terrible George for the last round he had now a lead of only one. There is not much difference between one and two—it

may all be accounted for by the very smallest of putts—but in a case of this kind[Pg 271] the moral effect is very great. You see, when you lead by two strokes you realise that you can afford to lose one of them and still be leading, but when you only have an advantage of one there is the cold truth that you cannot afford to lose anything at all or the lead will go—the lead that Mr. Gillies had held all the time. One may be sure that he felt this, for coming off that home green some one said to him quietly, "You still lead, Gillies," and he turned with a little melancholy and responded, "Yes, but one stroke is not much to lead Duncan by, is it?" The effect was visible at the first tee in the afternoon. He knew the responsibility. He took an infinity of pains, far too much. He addressed his ball until he was sick of looking at it any more, and then he topped it into the bunker in front of him. Good-bye, Open Championship of France! But there it was, a brilliant achievement for all that, and if he had won, as once he seemed likely to do, no man could have done justice to the golf history of that year with amateurs Ouimet and Gillies as Open Champions.

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Surely Mr. Gillies is one of the most interesting studies in the game at the present time. Born in New Zealand, he became a boat-race Blue at Cambridge, and is the only one who has won a high position in first-class golf. Now he is a surgeon in Upper Wimpole Street, already with a high reputation as a specialist in matters affecting throat, ears, and other organs of the head. He is evidently a man of immense will-power, with a most enviable capacity for concentration and for obliterating from his mind completely what is not essential to the business of the moment. He will work at his profession continuously for a week or a month and only just remember golf, and then he will suddenly appear in a great competition, perhaps a championship,[Pg 272] and be a golfer and nothing else whatever. That is as it should be, as it is always supposed to be in golf, but few men can exchange themselves to this extent. When he won the St. George's Cup at Sandwich he had not touched a club for ages, but somebody insisted on motoring him down there for the occasion. He had no idea of going to Chantilly, but was at Wimereux when an entry form was sent along to him there, and he said to Mrs. Gillies, "Let us go and watch the professionals," but they watched him instead. He is always going to courses he has not seen, and when he has not been playing golf for a long time, and then doing wonders on them. Tall and athletic in build, in demeanour he is solemn, and I have heard it said that his attitude at times somewhat suggests that he is about to put his opponent on the operating table—which in a sense he often does. He belongs to the hard thinking and slow playing school. Although he has a keen temperament, and is a man who at his best plays largely from inspiration, yet he is much of what we call a mechanical golfer, and is very measured and deliberative in his movements. He has studied and satisfied himself about what are the essential principles of this mysterious game, and he applies them to the best of his intense ability. He keeps himself steadier on his feet than almost any other player I can recall. Those who have had the necessities of pivoting on toes drilled into them from their first day at golf should make close observation of the Gillies way and see how well that way pays. He swings his club backwards but a little way and very slowly, but finishes the swing at great length. As is often the case with players of his attitude towards the game, his iron strokes are plain and they can be depended on.

But the most interesting feature of his system and his principles is the remarkable steadiness with which he[Pg 273] holds his head during the making of his stroke. We understand very well that of all principles this is the most imperative, and that he who disobeys it is completely lost. When we have fozzled we know well that the presumptive cause was a little movement of that most restless and anxious head. We know also that head movement disturbs the general balance, and induces body movement, and have not troubled to consider why. A reason seems vaguely obvious, but Mr. Gillies knows more about matters of the head than other people, and from his surgical knowledge he has come by one of the most interesting theories that have been propounded in connection with this game and believes in it absolutely, which is one reason why he has decided that, when driving, whatever happens his own head shall be absolutely motionless. This is not a matter for a layman to explain or guess at, and so I have gone to Mr. Gillies himself and begged from him his theory. He says to me, then, that he has always felt that keeping the eye on the ball is certainly the key to the situation, but in recent times he has realised that the importance of so doing is really in keeping still the delicate balancing organs of the head when executing the shot. These organs or semicircular canals are intimately connected with the eye, and also give one the sense of position. The least movement of the head upsets the fluid in these canals, so that the sense of position is more or less lost, according to the amount of movement. Without the sense of position the stroke is almost sure to fail. "I take it," he says, "that your visual memory is good enough to remember the position of the ball, if you shut your eyes just before hitting it; but if you move the head at the moment you cannot hit the ball correctly. Swaying the head in putting, as Tom Ball does, is probably not very disturbing owing to the movement being so slow that the fluid in the canals[Pg 274] does not get jerked. At the same time I can understand him requiring a great deal of practice to perfect the sway." To the layman this theory is very remarkable, and it is impressive for two reasons, one being that it is backed by expert scientific knowledge, and the other that it is emphasised by successful application.

And if Mr. Gillies is one of the most interesting figures that have arisen in amateur golf in recent times, most certainly George Duncan is the most interesting of the newer professionals. Here is an artist at the game if you will, the greatest genius of golf that has come up since Harry Vardon rose to fame. I am convinced that in the new period that is beginning with the inevitable decline, to some extent at all events, of the old triumvirate, George Duncan will be far and away the most conspicuous figure. He is a great golfer, and is in every way admirably fitted for supremacy. A more fascinating player to watch and study and think about afterwards has never driven a ball from the tee.

When he first came out it was declared that he was the fastest golfer who had ever lived. It was said that he walked up to his ball and hit it away before anybody had time to realise that he had taken his stance. He was likened unto hurricanes, lightning, and racehorses. I remember that Mr. Robert Maxwell, being once partnered with him, in an Open Championship I think, remarked afterwards that it was the most violent and disturbing experience of fast golf he had ever known. All this was true. Duncan never seemed to find it necessary to think as we do, and not merely we with all our doubts and hesitations, but those far better than we are, men who have won championships. He dispensed with all alternatives, those fatal alternatives that ruin[Pg 275] our own game. We often fail because there are not only so many ways of doing the same thing in golf, but because we try to think of too many of them when we have a stroke to play and change from one to another and then to a third, until our increasing indecision can be no longer tolerated and some sort of shot has to be played. Analyse your own emotions and experiences, and you will discover that this vacillation has been the cause of many disastrous failures. But George Duncan never suffered in this way. He is a man of lightning decision, of peculiarly sound and valuable inspiration, and he is one who, having once decided, does not swerve from his determination no matter what may be the allurements in the way of alternatives. Duncan does not know the alternative. He has no use for it. He does not recognise it. He believes that first thoughts in golf are best, and he abides by them. He decides and he acts. And he does all such thinking as is necessary for his decision while he is walking from the place where he played his last stroke to the place from which he will play his next, so that when he reaches his ball there is nothing to do but get to business without any waste of time. All these were features of the early Duncan just as they are of the present one, and they have been developed and perfected during the ten or dozen years that he has been out in the professional world.

But the Duncan of the early period had a fault of temperament in that he would go wild. He would at the moment of crisis lose his head, think of impossibilities and try to do them. He would lose his grip of his game. Elation and despondency would alternate too quickly in his mind. He would be careless; he would forget consequences. Who that ever saw it will ever forget the way in which he let the Open Championship at St. Andrews in 1910 slip from his grasp in that terrible last round? He had[Pg 276] done rounds of 73, 77, and 71, the third being then and still the record of the course. Another 77 would have given him the Championship. Instead of that he did an 83. The next year at Sandwich he did very much the same sort of thing in his third round. It has seemed that in each of the last four or five years he was good enough to win the Championship, and that it was largely his own fault that he did not do so. That is why we used to say of him that ambition should be made of sterner stuff, that these weaknesses of his temperament were inexcusable and must be stamped out.

Duncan has cured that fault of temperament now. He has stamped it out. The other day when he and I were discussing his predecessor in the same flesh, he said, "All that is past and done with. It is gone behind me. There is no more of it. I am quick still. I shall always be quick because that is I, Duncan, my nature. I cannot be anything else. And why should I not be quick? Are there not too many slow golfers in the world? But for the rest of it I am steady now. I feel hold of myself and the game. I do not forget." Championships should come quickly to him now.

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[Pg 277]

## CHAPTER XI

### RIVIERA GOLF, AND WHAT MIGHT BE LEARNED FROM LADIES, WITH A CONSIDERATION OF THE OVERLAPPING GRIP.



One who will only play on summer days is a little less than half a golfer after all. Golf at the full demands resource, good heart, some courage, and a settled nerve, and it is of its principle that in the matter of places, times, and weather the game shall be taken as it is found. Hence the real golfer should not only tolerate the play in the bad seasons when there are howling winds and drenching rains, and much of life seems damp and sad, but he might be expected even to feel some occasional satisfaction in it. One who can hold himself up to the big wind and drive a ball that whistles through it to the full drive length, then play a good second and all with fine allowance and good wind work with his irons, so that the game works out well enough for any day, is one whose contentment is a state to be envied. Rarely does one feel the thrills of the golfing life better than when playing well in a lashing wind, with clothes that soak and stick; the sense of mastery is magnificent. Yet of such luxuries of winter golf one may sometimes tire. The strong would be gentle again; and sunshine comes well after storms and leaden skies. Swearing in December that this winter shall see us stay at home[Pg 278] the season through, playing on our east coast links throughout, January finds us hesitate, and in February, if we wait till then, there is a journey being made away through France to the sweetness of life by the blue Mediterranean Sea. It is an unforgettable change. We have spoken wrongly when sometimes after, at the end of a winter season, we have declared we tired of it. Never.

We have returned to London weary at the end of a January day from Sunningdale or Walton Heath, or it may have been just back along on the underground from the Mid-Surrey course at Richmond, which seems as well in winter as any, and much better than most others. But London is murky and dirty. It is cold, it is windy, there is a drizzling rain, and the streets are very dirty. It will be three-quarters of an hour before we may be seated at the dinner table. Oh, we become a little tired of this! Troubles never come singly, and probably on such a day a match or matches have been lost. Those who are not of the community do not understand what worries make up the full agony of this game, and that is why the loss of two matches was considered by the gentle lady with her friend at tea to be the cause complete of the horrid din as of breaking furniture in the hall, the barely-stifled awful words, the yelping and limping of the little dog that suggested some sudden and unexpected injury, and the general impression that was conveyed throughout the household of havoc and disaster. "It is nothing," said gentle Fanny of the perfect understanding as, with her toes in pink satin on the fender, she poured another cup for Mrs. Larcombe. "Really, it is only George, who, I can tell, has lost *both* his matches, dear!"

But it was not the matches only. It was the waiting lone and weary for Marmaduke at the beginning of the day; it was the lame excuse of Marmaduke for[Pg 279] his tardiness; it was the aggravating manner of the man throughout and the stupidity of the caddie; it was the stickiness of the greens; it was something wrong with the fateful golfer's lunch that made it all worse in the afternoon; the slicing that was more frequent and farther into the rough; the pitch shots that were topped still more; and the putts that ever lipped and stayed outside. It was the luck that went viler all the time, the cruelty of circumstance, the misery of it all; and after the twin defeat the sad discovery and reflection that if one little thing—perhaps only the pressure of a finger—had been remembered about some big things that were wrongly done, it might all have been avoided. It is realised again that of all the sad thoughts the saddest is: "It might have been." It is then that the agony of golf is experienced; it is then that the golfer is not happy. And it is then, on the retreat to town, that one may seem to hear the Mediterranean call, and see a vision of a sun glistening on a flowered and song-laden land where golf is played. Take the chance, unhappy man; make the change then if you can.

The strongest emotions often arise from the widest and most sudden contrasts. Our beautiful English summer comes to us too slowly and gradually through the vicissitudes of spring for the fullest delight. One may step out from the mist and drizzle of a London street into the greater darkness of a theatre, and it is all blank and gloom and nothingness, but there is a quick expectancy. A few moments, and there is the tinkling of a bell, the curtain is rolled up, and there is a blaze of light with a pretty picture, perhaps, of summer with a full suggestion of Arcadia. Music and song, love and gladness, and younger again is the heart in years. Thus for a while the load is lightened. It is like that when one wanders to the Riviera for[Pg 280] golf in the depth of England's winter. We leave London when it rains and is cold and heavily depressing; the spirit is weary from the trials of the season. Charing Cross—the Channel—Paris, hardly less gloomy than her sister Londres,—the plunge into the rumbling darkness of the fast train on the P. L. M.—sleep and dreams. And in the morning the bell rings and the curtain of the new and sunny world rolls up, and it is glorious summer. Nothing in the way of change of scene is quite so good as this. Those who do not know the Riviera may try to imagine it, but in the clearest vision they cannot approach the grand reality of this sudden change. Marseilles—Toulon—Hyères—Costebelle; and there is the sunshine, the flowers, and the game. A rest of a day, quiet slumber through the night, and in the morning drowsily one hears a beat, beat, beat upon the window-panes, and, not being then awake to Hyères, or Costebelle, it seems perhaps but the dismal tapping of the London rain. But later it is discovered to be the tapping of the leaves and rosebuds on the glass. Breakfast on the terrace, the contenting cigar whose smoke rises wreathingly through a still atmosphere upwards to the blue, and then an effort to lift oneself from a summer languor. Clubs in possession again, a walk for a little way along a rose-fringed road, and then a plunge through a

coppice along a broken stony path that thousands of golfers have trod before. Through a field of narcissi, through the planted violets, past a little vineyard on to the plain below—there the golf course is. Then play the game all day, and mount to the hotel again when the afternoon is nearly spent. But in the earlier afternoon at Costebelle I would rather climb back through the little wood after my single round, enjoy this perfect illusion of summer, and read and rest in laziness. Tints of lemon and[Pg 281] citron come into the sky when the sun falls to its setting. Out beyond the plain is the sea and then the Iles de Hyères, or the Iles d'Or as they have been called, because the sun will shine upon them when it has left the mainland for the day—Porquerolles, Portcros, Titan, Bagaud, and Roubaud—a pearly-coloured group. You may make a short journey to them, to the blue Mediterranean which is so very blue. There is the delicate blue of the sapphire, and the richer blue of the turquoise. There is the wide blue of the Italian skies, and a wonderful blue in some women's eyes. But there is no blue that is so deep, so glorious, so soulful as that of the Mediterranean Sea, as in fancy I see it now. We gaze upon it and are content. All is so peaceful and pleasant. Over the hills comes a booming sound; it must be naval gunnery at Toulon. Grim realities of life and strife press even into this sweet scene. Yet they are French guns, and they are not meant for England either. I love Costebelle. For the simple sunny happiness of the life that is led there it is incomparable.

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And this happiness in scene and sun, be sure, is the greater part of the golf on the French and Italian Riviera. There is often much doubt by those who have not been there upon the quality of Riviera golf. It varies. It once was poor; it was bad. It is now much improved, and it is improving still as the demand for it has quickened, as the people of southern France who depend so much upon their British visitors have come to realise the full meaning of "the golf boom" and the education and bettered tastes of the golfing people who leave Britain in the winter time. It is now, as golf of the inland kind, quite tolerably good, which is to say that in degree it might rank fairly well up in the second class[Pg 282] of British inland golf. It is no better than that; it is sometimes not so good. Climatic difficulties on the Riviera are somewhat desperate. In the summer there is a continuous baking heat, and this is followed by days of warmth and nights of frost, and in such confusion of temperatures the golf courses have to be grown afresh for every season. Until recent times the putting greens needed to be newly sown and cultivated for every winter season, and I believe that it was at Nice that Mr. Hay-Gordon, secretary of courage and discernment as he is, first gave battle to the destructive climate and determined he would hold his putting greens—which at Nice are better than at almost any other place in southern Europe—right through the suns of summer and keep them on from one season to another. At Nice, again, thanks to gold, and thought, and enterprise, they have what the guardians of other Riviera courses do much envy, a magnificent supply of water, and this is lavished upon the turf through the dry time when the golfers are back at their homelands. The experiment of Nice, which was a fateful one, proved successful, and since then it has been copied by other clubs out that way, and greens are kept on and are much the better for it. In the old days it was a painful thing, as I remember it, to tread upon those tender new-born blades of grass, thin and scarce they were, and unfit for such usage as golfers give. It is far better now. Then also the construction of the courses has been much improved; but it must be remembered again that conditions and circumstances do not encourage or even agree with ideas of length and bunkering as we of Britain entertain them. Yet these things do not matter. We need no six thousand yards and no bottle-neck approaches when we wander southwards to the sun. Life shall be taken simply then; the press of existence shall be relieved, the game[Pg 283] shall be made a little gentler than at other times, the nerves shall not be unduly tried. So we discover that there is a virtue in what is little more than five thousand yards, a generous amplitude of short holes, and enough to satisfy of those that can be done with a driver and an iron of sorts. In a mood of ease and languor, when even strong men who like the game find joy in a mixed foursome, we come to admire the Riviera system; and we may find men at nights hard in argument upon the points and delicacies of the fifth hole or the fifteenth, the aggravations of the sixth and the sixteenth, when they would disdain to think of such like in their golfing life at home. That comes of the influence of the sun; it soothes and satisfies, and it makes contentment.

Then there is this good thing to be said for the Riviera golfing way, that it yields a very full variety, and it might well be advertised that it embraces something to suit all tastes. Not only does it vary in the kind of course, but in the way of life that is attached to it. The manner of living at Hyères and Costebelle is more of the English country kind and more sporting healthily open-air, with less of the flummery of fashion, than it is at other Riviera places, not meaning by that that there is not enough of good music and social entertainment for evening hours. The sea is a distance off, and there is next to nothing of promenading. Here we live well and are happy, and the sun is very warm. R. L. S. lived at "La Solitude" at Hyères, and he loved it. The golf in some respects is as good as elsewhere on the littoral; in some ways it is even a little better. There is the course of Hyères flanking one side of the quaint old town, and there is Costebelle with the chief hotel on the hillside on the other, and its golf course on the plain below. Hyères is a gentle course, pretty, smooth and nice, and much improved in[Pg 284]

recent times. The turf is good for southern France, and some of the holes are remembered, as where we play through an avenue of trees with silver bark. Golf is younger at Costebelle and it is quite different, but if one were led to make comparisons, as from which we shall refrain, it might be said that often youth is no harmful thing. Golf architecture had already advanced to a science when this course was first made, the first planning being done by Willie Park, and such as Mr. John Low have advised upon its improvement since, while M. Peyron has lavished much money and attention upon it too. Even if there are still some rawnesses apparent, golf at Costebelle comes near to being the real thing. Then it is a good point in favour of this end of the Riviera that here we have the golf almost at the door of our hotel as it is scarcely to be had at any other place. It is something to walk down to the first tee, and pluck a rose by the wayside as we go.

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That of Cannes is a pretty course. The Grand Duke Michael has done much for it and here he is a king. Society is high at Cannes, the people come along to La Napoule, six or seven miles from the town, in their motor-cars in a long procession, and it is the proper place for the luncheon party and such social entertainments as go well with a verandah, sunshine, and the flowers. One would go to the golf club at La Napoule even though one did not golf; many do—perhaps too many. Those who eat and chatter, kiss hands and smile, but never take a divot are losers of something that is heartening. A river runs through this golfing land, and twice we cross it by a famous ferry worked by hands upon a rope that is stretched across the stream. On one side of the river there are twelve[Pg 285] holes laid and on the other there are six; but the six may be considered to be better than the twelve for the pleasure that they yield. First we play three of the batch of twelve, and then we are floated to the precious six. Here there are big sand bunkers of a natural kind, and they are nicely placed. The fairway is tolerably good, and there are putting greens in pretty places.

If this were all it would be good; but the course of Cannes gains a splendid charm from its magnificent situation which cannot be ignored. There is a promise of beauties to come when we approach the club-house by that long avenue of golden mimosa; later there are glimpses of almost heavenly scenes. If the golf at these continental places is gentler than at home, such things as scenery may count for a little more. I have never had full sympathy with the suggestion that the golfer cares nothing for scenery or sparkling air except when he is off his game and then falls back upon them for compensation. There is not only hypocrisy in this, but in suggesting the player to be scarcely above the savage it is unfair to a healthy taste that has had some training in appreciation of natural beauties. One does not dwell upon cloud effects nor let the mind loose upon a panorama when the strokes are being done and there is a man to beat, but sunlight and sweet scenes have always their strong effect subconsciously, and it would be a pity if they had not. I shall not place the course of Cannes at La Napoule in that warring and jealous company, many clubs strong they are, each of which claims that it is the most beautifully situated in the world. I have played upon three or four of such courses, and indeed their claims have appeared to be strong. It is enough that Cannes is very beautiful. It will be well if there are a few moments for waiting caused by a slow-going match in front when your ball has been placed on its little pinnacle of sand on the fourth teeing ground, for spread[Pg 286] out in the distance there is a glorious panorama of the snow-capped Maritime Alps, on whose last spur there lies glistening white in the sunshine the little town of Grasse where sweet perfumes are distilled and where, as they say, twelve tons of roses are crushed to make a quart of essence. Grasse rests on that hillside like a linen sheet dropped there by the gods. When we have done this hole and face about, there are the pearly-tinted Esterels ahead. Hereabouts the holes are chiefly laid out through avenues of fir trees, and here and there, especially when one is approaching the eighth green, the picture is one that bears some suggestion of an Italian charm. Elsewhere in the round the Mediterranean is presented, as once when we look across the bay in which Cannes is placed to Cap d' Antibes at the opposite corner from La Napoule. By comparison some of the concluding holes are a little dull in looks; but when we play them in the afternoon the sun is setting behind the Esterels in front, and then there is indeed a sunset to be seen.

Again, the course of the Nice club is at Cagnes some miles out from the town. It is different from the others of the Riviera, and it has its special advantages. I recall an example of one of them which was the more impressive since it was made on the occasion of my first visit to the course. That was years ago, and we had been held up at Nice for five days and five nights by continuous and heavy rain during the whole of that long time, and it was in February too. Such a spell of Riviera wet seems almost incredible, but it happened, the oldest inhabitants, for the credit of their country, declaring that such a thing had never been before since the world as they knew it had begun. When this kind of thing happens on the Riviera there is only one thing to do, and that is go to the casinos; and it was bad for us in every way that this rain came down like that even[Pg 287] if it was good for the Casino Municipal and the others at Nice and for M. Blanc at the adjacent Monte Carlo. When the five days and five nights had been endured, when the heart had grown sick of what happened at the tables, when our thoughts had turned to Sicily and Egypt—for during this period of the flood I had made one voyage (we should call it a

voyage though the journey was done by motor-car along that glorious Grand Corniche) to the Riviera of Italy, and there at Bordighera and San Remo (and what a pretty little course it is at Arma di Taggia) found it to be raining still—the sun came out again and the question of golf arose to life. But surely, it seemed, golf would be impossible for some time; courses would need to dry. However, we argued that a stroke with a driving mashie is better than no play, and so we took the car at the Place Masséna and soon were out at Cagnes, and there we played on a course that was as dry as any course need ever be though the rain had been pelting down to within three or four hours before. In one or two hollow places there were little pools of casual water, but otherwise the state of things was such that we might sit upon the grass when the opposition was badly bunkered and needed time for his recovery. Others knew that Nice recovers quickly, for when we were out in the middle of the course we espied some figures a couple of long holes away, and about the attitude of one of them there was something strangely familiar. There was a manner of walking on the course not so much stiff as small and quite precise, and there was a club being carried vertically, head high up as if it were a gun and the carrier were one of a line of infantry. I can recall only one man who sometimes walks with his club like this—not that there is anything against it—and, knowing him, I still regret that opponent had not courage to accept a wager of anything from five francs to fifty that[Pg 288] I could name the man at that distance of seven hundred yards, having no knowledge that he I had in mind was on the Riviera at all. It was Mr. Arthur Balfour, ex-Prime Minister, who, chafing for lack of golf after his own five days' shutting up, had motored over from Cannes at the moment that the rain held up.

There is a certain plainness about many of the holes at Nice, but others are interesting. The first is appetising, the eighth is a mashie shot over a belt of trees, and the ninth is one of the longest I know, quoted on the cards at 605 yards and stretching away to the west, parallel with the sea-shore, and quite close to it so that a highly extravagant slice might deliver one's ball to the Mediterranean. However, we get there very quickly, and the hole is not so long as figures make it seem, for there is much run on the ball at Cagnes. One of the prettiest holes follows this one. The sociabilities here are excellent, and Nice itself, being rather a place of tumultuous excitement and very much within the Monte Carlo zone and influence, you may find it a beneficial thing in many ways to get out to the golf club as frequently as you can.

In recent times they have effected a great improvement to the course at St. Raphael, and up at La Turbie, overlooking Monte Carlo, and in one of the finest situations conceivable, they have made a new one with considerable luxury of appointment. The climatic difficulties which they had to encounter here, at a height of nearly two thousand feet, were such that they had not dreamt of, much less reckoned upon, and for a time an appreciable portion of the money was being lost on the greens that was being gained through the reds and blacks in the casino down below, the two organisations not being without association with each other. The construction of this course stands out as one of the great engineering feats of[Pg 289] golf. The top of the mountain on which it was determined that it should be made was a bare rocky waste. There was not even the necessary soil to grow the grass on. It was determined to take up the soil from a neighbouring valley, and three hundred men were employed to do the work. There was no railway, no horse or mule traction would get the stuff properly up that hillside, and so it was carried in baskets on the backs of those three hundred men. Next, rocks were blasted, the soil was spread, seeds were sown, and a result was awaited with anxiety. Then came down some tremendous rains, and down the hillside that soil was washed away, and most of the carrying up had to be done all over again. But labour and perseverance conquered, and at last the grass was made to grow, and the plain truth is that here now they have a course that for the Riviera is quite passably good, and most extraordinarily beautiful in its situation, the Alps being in the picture on three sides of it, and the Mediterranean down below on the fourth. On a fine day Corsica can just be seen. Now it is clearly indicated that the man who would demonstrate a perfect alliance with happy fortune must accomplish a grand double event. He should break the bank at Monte Carlo in the morning, and he should hole in one at La Turbie in the afternoon.

This course and that of Sospel are a new and separate feature of Riviera golf. Formerly the whole strength of the golf of the littoral lay at its western end, and it was down near to the level of the sea. Now Monte Carlo and Sospel, chiefly Sospel, have moved the balance a little nearer to the east. Sospel is agreeable; and here again the construction of the course and its improvement to its present good state stand for a great triumph of skill and perseverance. Sospel is some thirteen miles behind Mentone in a valley[Pg 290] of the Alpes Maritimes, and it is a quaint old place. If one never golfed at all, the journey there with all its thrills and excitements, and the picturesque little town that is at the end of it, are well worth a day of the time of any man. That journey may be made by motor-car, or now by tram, and one may safely say that there is no other golfing journey of its kind that can compare with it. As to the course, it possesses turf which is as good as anything to be found in the vicinity of the Mediterranean, and though the round is only a trifle over five thousand yards, and there is no hole of so much as four hundred, it is nice golf for all that, and the wooden club is needed frequently for the second shots.

Here and there by this Mediterranean sea new courses are being made. They have one at Grasse. There will be others soon. The truth is that dawdling on the Riviera has gone quite out of fashion, and it has come to be understood at last that this wine-like air and the golden sunshine are better than the dim light and dank atmosphere of the gaming rooms. A few persons who go to the Riviera in the winter seem to be nervously afraid of giving up much of their time to golf. I have heard them say to themselves and others: "Is not the golf of London better than anything by the Mediterranean, and why then do we pay hundreds of francs to come here merely to play golf, and almost forget that we are in the south of France?" You will not forget that you are by the blue sea to the south of Europe. Not only is the glory of this part of the world in winter better understood and better appreciated by those who golf than by those who don't, but by far the most is made of their time by the players of the game. I do not see what is the use of going to the Riviera unless one golfs.[Pg 291]

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It may seem a strange reflection, but it is the truth, that when at the Riviera for any length of time in the winter, and especially when at such a place as Hyères, one is inclined more to a thorough overhauling of one's game, a study of its weaknesses and a determination upon certain improvements, than at any other time. A good explanation is, however, possible. At holiday time like this one has the play continually. One is detached from all the workaday considerations of life at home. And then again one is thrown among new golfing friends from all parts of the world, people of infinite golfing variety and all charged with their own new ideas. We see every kind of style and every degree of skill, and if much of the style is bad and the skill is often deficient, there is something always to be learned or suggested. And it has been found as a matter of practical experience that at such places the majority of people fall to thinking of their ways of driving, often because their driving at the beginning out there is very bad, and that in turn is often due to the difficulty at first of sighting the ball properly in the pellucid atmosphere. But the whole system of driving is overhauled, and one would dare to suggest that proportionately to the number of players involved there are more conversions made from the plain grip to the overlapping on the Riviera in the season than anywhere else. Only this very morning as I write—a bitter cold morning when I shiver in proximity to an east coast links, and sigh for the passing of a few days more when the Channel shall be crossed and a glad journey south made on the P. L. M.—a letter comes up to me from a friend at Hyères demanding that all possible information printed and otherwise[Pg 292] shall be transmitted on the subject of the grip, for there is a drastic revolution to be made in the case of one anxious golfer! In this matter, one of the most important in all practical golf as it surely is, there is a suggestion of great value to be made.

The advantages of this grip as they are being discovered by more converts than ever before, are greater driving power owing to wrist work being easier, and also the fact that the left arm and hand pull the club through better and drive the ball as it ought to be driven, the overlapping reducing the right hand to a low subjection. No matter how good and careful the player may be, he who uses the two-V grip is certain sometimes to be in trouble with his right hand, which will constantly attempt to establish a lordship over the left, which when done is fatal to the good swing and the straight ball. Straight driving along a good, low trajectory, getting a ball with plenty of run on it, might almost be said to be characteristic of the overlappers, who are certainly off their drive less frequently than their brethren. These being the advantages of overlapping, how is it to be gained by those who have all along been addicted to the plain two-V way of gripping, and now find it impossible after many trials to convert themselves, these trials having been made in the most obvious way by hard practice on the teeing ground and with a brassey through the green? This is a good question to ask, but the answer is too often disappointing. Those who have started their golfing lives as old-fashioned two-V men seem fated to remain as such. As it happens, I believe I have come by the simplest and most effectual way of making the conversion; at all events, it is one that has never failed, though it has been tried in very many cases. It is simplicity itself. Nearly every man who tries to adopt this grip does so with his driver. It is natural, because it is for the[Pg 293] driving that he most wants the grip, and he never thinks about it for anything else. In these experiments, however, he feels in constant danger of missing the ball—and sometimes does miss it—is most extremely uncomfortable, entirely lacking in confidence, and sooner or later comes to the conclusion that the overlapping grip, whatever its merits, is not for him. The sure and certain way is to begin with the putter, which is easy and also valuable, because the experience of the best players is that the overlapping grip improves one's putting at least as much as it does one's driving. You may become accustomed enough to this way of gripping the putter on the first day to try it in the most important match or competition. After two or three weeks of this way of putting, let the grip be tried for short running-up approaches, which will be satisfactorily accomplished after a very little practice, and then, after another week or two, let it be used for short lofted shots. The crisis comes when a swing of such length has to be made that the head of the club has to be raised more than elbow-high. A difficulty will be experienced at this stage, but it will soon be overcome, and when it is the way to overlapping with the driver is opened. Within a week the man is a complete and happy convert.

On the general question of grips and gripping, which is high in the minds of golfers preparing for their season's campaign and setting their bags in order, one does feel that points of detail are not generally considered as they should be. In many cases the grip has really more to do with the effectiveness of a club than the head thereof, and yet perhaps not more than one golfer in four is properly suited. In general the grips are too short, too thick, and their thickness is too uniform. A very thick grip tends to take weight from the head, to spoil the feel and balance of the club, and [Pg 294] to reduce the sense of control over it, but thickness in moderation is good for weak hands and fingers. Thin grips throw the weight into the head, give extra control, and improve the feel, but in excess need strong hands and fingers. The professionals nearly all use quite thin grips, their hands and fingers being very strong. But remember that the right hand and its fingers are stronger than the others, and also that that hand has less work to do in gripping, while as it is mainly concerned with steadying and guiding it is best suited by thinness of grip. Clearly, then, the grip should be thicker for the left hand than for the right, should, in fact, taper. This morsel of theory is overwhelmingly justified in practice, and that is what we mean when we say that most grips are too uniform in thickness, for they are nearly as thick for the right hand as for the left, and end suddenly with a kind of step just beyond the place where the right forefinger is applied. For hands of moderate strength let the circumference at the top for the left hand be 2-11/16 in. in diameter, and at the place where the right forefinger holds on let it be 2-1/2 in. From this point let it taper off gradually for about 4 in. until the leather has nothing underneath it, and then half an inch of wrapping on the bare stick brings the grip, as it were, to fade away into nothing. The full length of a grip of this kind may be about 12-1/2 in., and the tapering conduces greatly to the improved feel of the club and to a look that somehow makes for confidence. In the case of iron clubs the length and the decreased thickness towards the bottom are very good when taking a short grip of the club.

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Matters appertaining to ladies' golf also come more prominently before the average male player of the game when he is on the Riviera with the sun than they [Pg 295] do at other times. He sees more of it for the reason that his home exclusiveness cannot be tolerated there, and he sees much to make him think, even though the best lady players of the game do not often go that way. After watching a ladies' championship for the first time I left the place with some deep reflections. The idea that men have anything whatever to learn from ladies in regard to golf may seem preposterous, but it is not so. There may be a thousand times as many good men golfers as there are lady golfers who are as good, but there are just a few of the latter who are very good indeed, far better than they are generally supposed to be, and their style and methods are very well worth studying. When great events are stirring in golf the leading Scottish newspapers regularly print leading articles upon them, of so much general importance are they considered. After the ladies' championship in question, I read a leading article in a Glasgow daily newspaper, and it said that it was evident that if Miss Ravenscroft and Miss Cecil Leitch were to enter for the Amateur Championship and were to maintain their best Turnberry form the result would be disconcerting to those who hold that the scratch man can give the equally competent woman golfer half a stroke or thereabouts. With this I agree. The game of girls who can drive 250 yards, who can win 330-yard holes in threes to other girls' fours, who can do nine holes in 37, and so forth, needs to be taken quite seriously. The real importance of the matter is just this, that the best of these girls have arrived at a result which is superior to that attained by the average man golfer, and they have reached it by a system and a method which are practised by comparatively few male players. Their golfing principles and styles are quite different. Is there nothing we can copy from them? Surely. [Pg 296]

Now we hear very much about 300-yard drives, which one is half given to understand have become the regular thing with the most modern balls; but we know, as a matter of fact, that the average man does not drive anything like this distance, and that he would give a part of his income to be able to drive as far as some of the very best girls do at the championships. They achieve their distance not at all by hard hitting, for they hit quite gently, but by long, free swinging, perfect timing, and especially by full following through, that is to say, they swing in just the same way as it was necessary for the best men players to swing in the days of the gutty ball. They finish their swings with the club head and shaft right round their backs and their hands well up; I saw some of them who made nearly as perfect models of the golf swing as Harry Vardon does in the picture made of him by Mr. George Beldam and in the statuette by Mr. Hal Ludlow. Their style was most excellent and it was a fine thing to see. Necessity has caused it. These girls have not the strength of arm, wrist, and fingers to get a good length in the same way that men get, or try to get it now; the rubber-cored ball has not made the game so easy for them that they can dispense with an inch of the fullest swing that they can make. They seem to use their wrists but little, and all their movements are as smooth and harmonious as they can be. In this way they drive many yards farther than the average man golfer does. In the Amateur Championship you will not see one man in three drive the ball in this way now. Short swinging, imperfect following through, and a jerky, snappy kind of hitting have become almost general now that the balls can be so easily driven by the exercise of mere wrist power. The result is that

good style in driving has become very rare among men. From the point of view of results obtained this is [Pg 297] well enough for men who play in championships; they drive much farther than the best girls do, though I do not think that they are generally so straight. But the average golfer, consciously or unconsciously, copies his superiors, and most of them have now no style and do not know the sensuous pleasure that is obtained from a full swing, a clean hit, and the complete finish which seems to give a thrill to every nerve in the system. Then, if these men with all their jerks and wrist strain still do not get that length to which they may think they are entitled—as most of them do not—would it not be worth while to go back to the old way of better style and practise most assiduously at the full swing until they get it right? The very best girls show evidence of fine schooling in this matter. They hit the ball with marvellous cleanness. In a large proportion of cases the advice to male players in these days to swing short and hit hard is sound so far as mere results are concerned. But all men are not so strong in the forearm as they may think, and they do not get the length they seek, while another thing to remember is that the long complete swing when once mastered is less frequently thrown out of gear than the short one, which is a very difficult thing to keep in order.

Then there is something to notice also in the preliminaries to the drive as the really good girls go through them. Not all players suspect what a deep influence the preliminary waggle of the club has on the subsequent swing. The influence is enormous, and the way that the majority of male players waggle is one that directly encourages jerky hitting. You will find that they tighten their wrists as they lay the club to the ball and move the head of the club back in two or three short, quick movements, rarely letting the head go forward over the ball. This is strongly conducive to a fast back-swing, a fast on-swing, and no follow [Pg 298] through. It makes for the hard hit pure and simple. Now many girls who get long balls by big swings keep their wrists very loose in the waggle and allow the head of the club to swing easily backwards and forwards like a pendulum two or three times, four or five feet in front of and behind the ball each time, so that when the real swing is entered upon it is almost a continuation of the waggle and is made at much the same pace. This is a direct encouragement to the long swing, long follow through, and smooth rhythm of the entire movement. Between the man's waggle and his swing when done in the manner described there is no sort of connection whatever, and the driving is always much the poorer for the fact.

Again, in the putting the ladies' play is full of morals for men. I do not hesitate to say, after an immense amount of observation, that the putting of many of the girls at their championship is quite as good as most of that we see in the men's Amateur Championship. They are deadly with the short putts up to two yards, and they hole the long ones with astonishing frequency. They come to their conclusions speedily as to what is the proper thing to do, and, having done so, they make their strokes with no further hesitation. We see very little tedious and laborious examination of the line, and, we may be sure, that they are the gainers for it. In the men's Amateur Championship the wearisome ways of some of the competitors are notorious. They study the line meditatively from north, south, east, and west, convince themselves of the existence of influences which do not in reality exist at all, next they hang over the ball with their putter addressed to it until one suspects them of having fallen into a cataleptic state, and then they miss the putt. The girls putt with a great confidence and accuracy. Of course these eulogiums refer only to the best of the lady golfers; between them and [Pg 299] the others there is a very big gap, and it would be ridiculous to pretend that the average championship girl is yet within miles, as it were, of the corresponding man. But she has ways that the average man might often copy to advantage. Miss Cecil Leitch, who is surely the finest mistress of golfing method and style that her sex has ever yielded to the game, and is splendidly worthy of the championship that at last, after much waiting, she won at Hunstanton in the summer of 1914, comes as near to being a perfect model as any one I can think of. She has graced a masculine way in golf with some feminine delicacy, and there is art, there is science, and there is rhythm in all her golfing movements. And she is splendidly accurate. Her iron play is a thing to be admired, and one might say of her as one cannot of all players who have been many years at the game, whatever may have been their success, that she is indeed a golfer.

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And whoever is the champion of any particular period may be interested to know that at no time and place is he ever so much appreciated as away from his own country during the time when it is so wet and cold at home that people play comparatively little—less perhaps than they should do. As masters indeed they are properly regarded, and most dissectingly discussed are the champions when their disciples are abroad; and it is a good thing too, for if there must be influences on the game of humble players, let them come from the heights. In this matter many of us have always regarded John Henry Taylor as quite one of the best of models, despite what any one may say about a lack of beauty in his style. Taylor, five times champion, is indeed a very great master of this game, and he has [Pg 300] special advantages as a model in that first he is deeply practical and can explain everything he does correctly (I know some of the greatest players who explain, but incorrectly, that is, they do

not even know what they do themselves), can reason, and is almost, as one might say, a medium between the inspired play of Vardon and the mechanical way of Braid. He is one of the most thoroughly practical golfers who have ever played, and perhaps he has taught more other golfers than any one who has ever lived. I believe that to be the case. Taylor plays his wooden clubs with a round swing, and to-day some great authorities are disposed to condemn that style of swing utterly and declare that only the upright one is the real thing. But what about Hoylake in 1913? Then Taylor won his fifth championship, and he did it chiefly, as I believe, by his magnificent driving, done in such circumstances of terrible weather as would have made it next to impossible for any ordinarily good player to drive at all. Above everything, Taylor's golf is effective, and it is effectiveness we want.

Once he explained in an interesting way how he viewed his own driving and how he gained the power that he does with his comparatively short swing. He is what we may call an open-stancer, and he insists that stance and character of swing must be adapted to each other in a special way, that for the open stance only a round-the-body swing is suitable, and that when a man plays an upright sort of swing with a square stance his right elbow must inevitably leave his side, and that is one of the worst and most frequent faults in driving, though one often little suspected or appreciated. If he stood square, says the champion, he feels he would lose direction; if his swing were upright he thinks he would lose distance, and if his right elbow were allowed to leave his side, then he is sure he would lose power; and[Pg 301] direction, distance, and power are the three essentials of good driving. So he is all for the open stance and flat swing, and one of its chief merits and necessities is that in the back-swing the wrists do not permit the head of the club to move outwards and backwards in the line of flight behind the ball as it has been preached they should do, but begin to circle the club round at once, and by this means the right elbow is kept to the side. The importance of this elbow movement is very great. It might be safe to say that more than half the golfers of to-day do it wrongly and suffer accordingly. Taylor urges, of course, that the initial turn of the wrists at the very beginning of the swing is extremely important; and then as to the arm movement, he emphasises that the right elbow should be kept close to the side and should move round the side irrespective of any movement of the body. That makes for a smooth flat swing, and a sense of enormous gain in power is certainly the result. He says that he feels a gain of half as much power again by this movement in comparison with an upright swing. The initial wrist movement induces it. He warns those who think of trying to flatten their swing, and so gain some of the power which he certainly has, against allowing excessive body movement to which they will be very liable.

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[Pg 302]

## CHAPTER XII

### ABOUT THE PYRENEES, AND THE CHARMS OF GOLF AT BIARRITZ AND PAU, WITH POSSIBILITIES FOR GREAT ADVENTURE.

It is not a bad thing to be at the Gare d'Orsay in Paris on a night in early February, seeing a porter attach to one's baggage a scarlet label with the words "Pyrenees—*Côte d'Argent*" printed diagonally across it on a bright yellow band. It indicates a journey southwards to the sun, to a corner of the Bay of Biscay where there are Biarritz and St. Jean-de-Luz and Pau, and the Pyrenees queening over all. Golf was played in these parts some ages back; indeed it was here that the foundations of continental winter golf were laid long before any stir was made elsewhere. It is not always warm at Biarritz; often it is windy; sometimes it is very cold; but generally it is genial and pleasant, constantly sunny, and there is something about the place that conduces to a strong and healthy sporting feeling. It is a matter of taste. I am not here to write down that from the golfing point of view it is either better or worse than the Riviera. They are not the same. They have bad holes at each, and some good ones at both. Biarritz, which is one of the most popular golfing winter resorts in existence and retains its great popularity in spite of its rivals (really when I was there lately in the month of February they told me they had already taken £700 in[Pg 303] fees that month, though there was then still a week to go), has some holes which, as we think upon them at home in England, seem quite shockingly bad. They are not so much bad as nearly improper. And yet when we are at Biarritz we do love these holes, as do the great players without exception, and as lief would we suggest the filling up of the Cardinal bunker at Prestwick and the flattening of that range of Himalayas at the same glorious golfing place as touch an inch of the face of the Cliff hole at Biarritz. The course has the gravest



faults, but it is very enjoyable to play upon in February, and in the winds that blow there one needs to be playing uncommonly well to get round in figures reasonably low. On the other hand, the golf at Nivelle by St. Jean-de-Luz and Pau is among the winter's best in Europe. There is indeed much difference between the coast of silver and the coast of blue, and the contrast comes out strongly in the golf. There is less of music and flowers and softness of life, less languor at Biarritz than at Cannes and Nice and other Riviera places. The games are everything, and the easy strolls and the social dalliances are much less. In the morning we seldom see the young ladies in fine costumes bought in Paris. They flit fast about the streets and along up the Avenue Edouard VII. in short skirts and the simplest *semi-négligé* dress, each with a brightly coloured jersey-jacket of a very distinctive colour—a brick red, a sulphur yellow, a cobalt blue, something that does not hide itself. Every one is keen and openly admits it. And the golf club beyond the lighthouse is a great institution, and it is splendidly governed by Mr. W. M. Corrie, the honorary secretary.

Biarritz golf is distinctly peculiar. The course is a short one; it offers a generous continental supply of holes that can be reached with a good shot from the tee (but they must be good and well-directed shots, for the[Pg 304] guards of the greens are exacting), and the turf and putting greens are as good as one has any right to expect them to be in the south of France. These are generalities. Now the course, like the old Gaul of Caesar, is in three parts. We begin the play and go on for some seven holes on a flat tableland; then we plunge down over the cliffs to the level of the sea, come up again to the tableland at the thirteenth hole, and so finish on the level. One may leave the first part of the play out of consideration. It is neat, but one often feels the desire to be "getting down below," where there is better sport and much scope for skill and enterprise. At last we come to a teeing ground on the edge of the steep white cliff which is some hundred and thirty feet in height. It is a drive-and-iron hole that is before us, and quite a pretty thing, a hole that for feature and natural beauty it would not be easy to improve upon. To a part of the underland, where the drive must be placed, has been given the name of "Chambre d'Amour," and tales for sorrow and weeping are told of it, of lovers being caught by the tide and dying there. The green is away in a corner of the course, tucked up in the shadow of a towering lighthouse, and the bounding waves of Biscay come rolling almost to its very edge. If we are not convinced that it is technically perfect, this is at all events a charming hole, one of the most picturesque we can find in France. At the lighthouse we turn about, play some plainer things along the level of the sea, and then come to a piece of golf which is famous all over the world. The ascent to the higher surface has to be made at the thirteenth, and it is done at what is known to every one as the Cliff hole.

Nearly all who have never even seen it have heard of the Cliff hole of Biarritz, have studied pictures of it, and speculated upon its peculiar difficulties. No hole[Pg 305] on the continent of Europe has nearly such a reputation; indeed, it is perhaps the only one with a special celebrity. I have been asked questions about it in America. I have seen and played it, examined it thoroughly, and thought it out. It is a queer thing, quite different from any other hole I know. It needs such a shot to play it properly as is not demanded elsewhere. And yet it requires absolute skill, the proper shot must be played and played thoroughly well, and it is practically impossible to fluke it. Why, then, should this not be reckoned a good golfing hole? The circumstances are these: The teeing ground is on the lower level, and it is only some fifty yards from the base of the cliff. The ground in between is rough and stony. The cliff here is about forty yards in height, and, if not vertical in the face, bulges outwards frowningly at the top, while a thin stream of water trickling down at one side seems to add a little more to the fearsomeness of the thing. At the top edge of the cliff there is grassy ground sloping quickly upwards for about a dozen yards until a line of wire is reached, and there the green begins. The fact that the green (which is tolerably large and in two parts, an upper and a lower) then slopes downwards away from the player does not make matters easier. Beyond it is another precipice, but wire netting is there to save the ball from this, and there is some wooden palisading to keep it out of trouble on the left. Then there is a local rule saying that if the ball reaches the top of the cliff, but does not pass the wire, it must be teed again, with loss of distance only, the man not being allowed to play it from the tee side of the wire. (He would do so at peril of toppling over the cliff!) But all these things do not make this awful hole much easier in the play. One day I sat on the edge of the cliff and watched the people playing it, and the ball that reached the green and[Pg 306] stayed there was a rarity. It can be done. Braid and Taylor and Vardon would do it all the time, and it is no trick shot that is wanted. You might hit hard at the ground in front of the wire and make the ball trickle on, but that would call for more than human accuracy. Or you might sky your ball up to the heavens and let it fall straight down on to the green, and that would be superb. But champion Taylor would take his mashie and play, perhaps, some fifteen yards above the cliff with all the cut that he could put upon the ball, and then he would be putting for a two. A difficult hole follows, but after that the work is easier.

With a pair of prism glasses looking Spainwards to the left, we may just discern the quaint and quiet little town of St. Jean-de-Luz. It is one of the best of the winter places for golf, for health and sunshine, and no nonsense. The little town is thoroughly Basque, and the player in his hours away from the game will have a good satisfaction in wandering about it and peering into such places as the old thirteenth-century church which is a perfect specimen of the religious architecture of the Basques, and such a thing in churches as you would not see elsewhere. It was here that Louis XIV. came for his wedding two and a half centuries back. And in this locality we have three courses to play upon—three! There is the old one of St. Barbe, which is a nine-holes affair, and has one hole—the third—called the "Chasm," which is a very strong piece of golf, for the drive is over a deep fissure in the rocks, with the sea running in below. St. Barbe is the second oldest course in France—Pau being the oldest—and there are some fears, perhaps exaggerated, that it may not be in existence for many years more. Another of the three is the course[Pg 307] of the St. Jean-de-Luz club at Châlet du Lac, and this also is one of nine holes. Until a little while since there were twelve, but then three were captured by the terrible builders, who seem to oppress the golfers all over the world; but the club received some compensation in having a new and neat little club-house erected for them at the landlord's expense. And here also they make the claim that "the scenery surrounding the course is probably the finest to be obtained from any course in Europe." Certainly it is very good. The nine holes are very tolerable in golfing quality. Here and there the driving must be very straight. A pull, for instance, at the third, will deliver the unhappy ball to the Bay of Biscay, and the sea will bang it about the rocks for a long time after. At the fifth, again, one must respect the ocean when approaching. Generally, however, the holes are somewhat easy, and do not worry so much as to hinder appreciation of the surrounding views, which are indeed magnificent. Out one way is the grand panorama of the snow-topped Pyrenees, and the light and colour effects upon them change at nearly every hour throughout the day. Below is the pretty harbour and town of St. Jean-de-Luz. Away to the west is the great expanse of the Atlantic, framed here at the course with a wildly rocky coast, and up along to the north is a rough fringe of shore, the innermost corner of the Bay of Biscay, which leads the eyes out to the most distant point, where a cluster of buildings gleams in the sunlight, and the tall, white lighthouse beyond them indicates that the place is Biarritz.

But Nivelle, the course that rises up from the bank of the broad river of that name, is the chief course of the group and quite a wonder of golfing France. When I first saw it and inquired upon its origin I felt that here was something which was undoubtedly among the best in Europe, and yet only five or six years ago all the[Pg 308] land, except a small piece which is occupied by two of the eighteen holes, was bare soil on which cabbages, turnips, and other edibles were being grown. Listen to the story of the creation of Nivelle. One day Mr. Frank Jacobs, the secretary of the St. Jean-de-Luz Club, and a Spanish doctor, went exploring the country round, and they hastened to Count O'Byrne to tell him that there was ground on the banks of the stream Nivelle which looked to have the possibilities of such a full-sized golf course as was needed then. He agreed with them. They were men of keen discernment; for even then while a little of that land was pasture the rest was under cabbages and other growths. It was ascertained that a hundred and sixty acres could be bought for six thousand pounds, but such a sum of money was not at hand. Count O'Byrne told the local hotel-keepers the truth that unless there was a first-class golf course there St. Jean-de-Luz would lose in the race for winter popularity, and he asked them to guarantee the money in the first place, a company to relieve them afterwards. They did so accordingly, and the land was secured; but the farmers could not be turned off at once, and some time was lost thereby. When they came to make the course they followed an interesting and, as we would think, an extraordinary procedure. The farmers, recovering from their grief and resentment, gave up to the incoming golfers a priceless secret. They said that if they would leave the bare land alone to look after itself it would from its own sources grow for them the most beautiful grass for their purposes that they could ever dream of on the happiest summer's night. So the Count and his comrades gathered their men about them, the land was raked and smoothed out, and then they borrowed the town roller, being the heaviest thing of the kind in the district, to flatten it down. And so they left it and waited. Sure enough up came the tender[Pg 309] blades of grass, and in a season there was a thick coating there, fine, beautiful turf, and I can answer for it that it is nice to the touch of the feet and excellent for the game. The climate in these parts is most times a little moist and better for the production and preservation of golfing turf than that of the Riviera. The hotel-keepers were soon relieved of the full responsibility by a company floated for ten thousand pounds, the capital afterwards being increased to twelve thousand, but they were so much enamoured of the project, believed in it so utterly, that they and the tradesmen took up as many shares as they could get. But some great personal driving force was needed, and it was found. A Dundee gentleman, a keen golfer and a great lover of this sweet spot in France, Mr. W. R. Sharp, came forward and increased his commanding interest in the club and the course, and he has done wonders for them. That he is president of the club is a good thing for the club. Now there is a charming club-house; Arnaud Massy, once open champion, has a pretty villa for himself close by, some hundred and forty golfers are playing on the course at the busy time—and play goes on all through the year—and only four years after the course was opened the company was able to pay a dividend. So I say that this is a miracle of golf.

Of course, the story is not complete at this. Fine turf and a prosperous club do not necessarily make good holes. But St. Jean-de-Luz has holes as good as most in Europe. They would even be good on a first-class inland course in Britain. They are, thanks to the broad undulations of the land, good in character. The round is opened with a fine two-shotter of a full four hundred yards, with an incline against the player from the tee. The drive must be properly placed, and that is the case nearly all the way round. The second is a pretty short hole; the third presents a fearsome drive across a [Pg 310] yawning quarry; at the fourth the return over it is made in the progress to the longest hole, one of five hundred and fifty yards, and so on to the end, some of the middle holes being very good, the seventeenth a fine full one-shot hole, and a good drive and iron of three hundred and eighty yards downhill to terminate. The view from the seventeenth and eighteenth tees, the town of St. Jean-de-Luz shining in the sun, the Nivelle pressing itself into it, and the pretty harbour white-flaked with the waves, is peaceful and pleasant, and it gives that sense of "going home" which one always likes to have when playing the last holes of a round.

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The game itself is not everything in the golfing life; it attaches other occupations and diversions as necessities to itself which are all added to the sum of "a day's golf" and make of it a thing of adventure and time packed with variety of deed and thought. There is the meeting and the parting; the lunch time and—everything! Chiefly there is the journey, and has it been properly considered how golf and the car have been linked together for a magnificent combination of sporting joy? In the remembrances of every player there must be happy and stirring episodes of motoring to and from the game. I have hundreds of them, apart from all those countless pretty spins on the outskirts of London town. Motoring for golf is an entirely different thing from motoring for nothing.

The golf-motoring out from Paris to Fontainebleau and the other places round the capital of France is unforgettable, and always will there be clear cut in my mind the details of an expedition I once made to this Nivelle, St. Jean-de-Luz, at a time when lounging golfless in the north of Spain. It is not frequently that [Pg 311] we go crossing frontiers in motor-cars and having our clubs examined with wonderment and irritating inquiry by officers of the *douane* twice in the day, going and returning, for just two rounds of the best of games. Nor is it a common thing that in one day English golfers should speed along in a German car from Spain to France and from France back again to Spain to play on a splendid course with French and Scottish opponents—a considerable mixture, if you like. I was idling at San Sebastian when the aforesaid Mr. Sharp, with such thought and kindness as golfers display towards each other, gave greeting and said, "Come to Nivelle again for a day of play." But how? It was thirty miles away, and those trains, with changes at Irun and Bayonne, would be most fearfully slow. "Bother the trains!" said Sharp, "what are motors for, and particularly what may be my own car for? Say the time when you will have risen and bathed and taken your *café complet*, and it will have gone over to San Sebastian by then." So it came about that it was waiting at the door of my hotel at eight o'clock in the morning. Coats were buttoned up, pipes were lighted, and when the first quarter was being chimed from the church steeples we were already doing our thirty to forty miles an hour through the hilly suburbs of San Sebastian. There are such hills in Spain and France between San Sebastian and St. Jean-de-Luz as you can hardly think of; but the speed dial showed that we flashed up some of them at thirty and darted down the other side at sixty-five. Great hills to the left with jagged skylines and strange formations as go by such names as "Camel's back"; and such sweet vales with mountains framing them over on the right! Hereabouts is some of the prettiest scenery of Spain, and I hope not to forget how on that glorious morning the mists of the new day dissolved in the warming sunlight, and the [Pg 312] opalescent gossamer that had clung about those peaks of Spain gave place to strong blues and greys, and then to shimmering rose. At Irun, on the Spanish side of the frontier, the car's papers had to be shown, then we bowled over the dividing river, and at Hendaye the Frenchmen asked their questions and did their looking into things. Then up a steep hill for the last, and in a few minutes we were gliding down into St. Jean-de-Luz, all of this heartening business done within the hour. At the end of the day, two rounds done, when the sun was setting, I was swung again over those Spanish tracks, and just when the light had completely failed and a few spots of rain came beating upon the glass the sixty horses in the Benz had done their duty. I opened the casement of my room at the Maria Christina; soft sounds from the sea floated in, and soothed one to a pensive mood.

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The case of the golf of Pau is curious. Here, so far away from Britain, far from Paris, four hours even from the coast at Biarritz, inland and hugging closely to the Pyrenees, we have positively one of the oldest golf clubs in the whole world. At the beginning there was Blackheath, and then there were the Edinburgh Burgess, the Honourable Company, the Royal and Ancient, Aberdeen, and two or three other clubs. Golf, growing up, made

its first leap across the seas to Calcutta in 1829, and seventeen years afterwards it settled in Bombay. It first landed in Europe in 1856, and was definitely and thoroughly established at Pau, and has remained there flourishing ever since. This circumstance is the more curious when we reflect that at that time there was no golf about London except at Blackheath. The Royal Wimbledon and the London Scottish Clubs[Pg 313] were then unborn. Such great institutions now as the Royal Liverpool Club at Hoylake and the Royal North Devon at Westward Ho! were undreamt of, and a boy child might have been born to a golfer at Pau and grown almost to middle age before the Royal St. George's Club at Sandwich was begun. Scots, of course, were at the bottom of all this pioneering work. The early Blackheath golfers were Scots; they carried the game to Westward Ho!; they fostered it in India, and some of them went off with it to Pau, where they liked to spend the winter in the warm sunshine and in air which for sweet softness is almost incomparable. Over the fireplace in the smoking-room of the club-house is a picture of three of the founders of the club, who were still living in 1890—Colonel Hutchinson, Major Pontifex, and Archbishop Sapte. Another of those founders was Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Lloyd-Anstruther. Thus it happens that the charm of age and long settlement hang upon the golf of Pau as they do upon no other golf club in Europe. Here, as not elsewhere, you feel impressed upon you the dignity of golf, realise that it is not a thing of to-day or of yesterday, and there are almost the same deep pleasure and elevation of spirit and feeling when you come to such a place after wandering among newnesses elsewhere as there are in abiding for a while at St. Andrews or North Berwick in October, the crowds then being gone away, after a course of southern golf of the most recent preparation.

The club-house at Pau is of the kind you would expect to discover at a good club of long and honourable standing up-country in England. The attributes of age and tradition are to be found within it. On a wall is a painting twelve feet long depicting the leading golfers of Pau in 1884, assembled on the course, and it was done by that Major Hopkins who did such[Pg 314] work, now celebrated, concerning the earliest golfers at Westward Ho! gathered by their iron hut. In this picture of Pau there are some eminent golfers shown, such as Colonel Kennard, not long since dead, who was field-marshal of the Royal Blackheath Club; but the artist leads the eye to the gaunt figure of Sir Victor Brooke, a tam-o'-shanter on his head, addressing the ball on the tee in the way of a determined man. Sir Victor, for four or five years captain of the club, was the lion of the golf of Pau in those days, and when a match book, now lying musty in a corner, was started his was the first entry that was made in it. The course is beautifully situated on the Billère plain, a mile or so to the west of the middle of the town; and in the unusual absence of a friendly car it is a pleasant walk through a shaded avenue of lofty beeches in the splendid Parc du Château.

One is a little puzzled to estimate the quality of this course, being faced with a kind of semi-official printed statement that "Pau is undoubtedly the best course on the continent" which to some degree is intimidating. The turf, grown on a dark, sandy soil, is excellent, and more than fifty years of play upon it have given it the firmness and crispness that we miss elsewhere. The holes are of good length, well arranged, and not easy. Yet pancake was never flatter than the central part of the course, and with the very dullest and plainest kind of mid-Victorian bunkering—three low, straight grassy banks in line with each other right across the fairway—the golf hereabouts is less good to the eye, at all events, than it is to the spirit in the play. The first hole, a long one, with a road running diagonally across near the green, close to which there is a little cottage, somehow by its surroundings recalls memories of old "Mrs. Forman's" at ancient Musselburgh, and the second is a short hole of quality. From the fourth[Pg 315] tee the line of the course bends round to the right, and for half a dozen holes we are away from that central part; there are ups and downs in the land that give more colour to the golf, and here and there are clumps of bushes that need consideration. All the time we are close to the bank of the River Gave, and at length, near to a point where a wild stream plunges into it, we cross to a spit of land between them and play a few holes there. They are nice holes. The ground heaves and rolls, and there must be good calculation and accuracy in approaching. Another stream runs through this isolated part of the course, and the green of the fourteenth hole closes to a point where two running waters nearly meet and there is a rutty road alongside. It is a pretty green, the situation is cunning and delightful, and that fourteenth hole is one of the best in France. Not a doubt about it—Pau is very good in parts. But we turn up a note on the golf in a little guide to Pau, and read: "Owing to the nature of the soil and their admirable preservation, the links at Pau compare favourably with the course at St. Andrews, in Scotland, where the conditions are almost ideal." O, Pau!

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Now Pau is one of those places where the golf, excellent and admired, is not domineering, as one might say. You take it, you enjoy it, and yet you live in an easy contentment after your game without raving about it. It is a delightful little of a most happy and contenting whole. That is because Pau of all places on this planet makes one feel rested, contented, peacefully, languorously happy, and that is a most blessed state at which to arrive after a long season's course of tubes and taxi-cabs, noises and disturbances, crushes and[Pg 316] crashes, late nights and

far too early mornings, and, yes—for they also come with the burden of the Londoner—heavily bunkered five-hundred-yard-holes near our excellent London town. The air is famous for its sweet soothing properties. It wraps itself round your tired limbs, it steals into your nervy senses, and it comforts you. Pau lets you quietly down, rests you, gives you sleep, stills those jagged nerves that twitched so much in town. Every one says so, and it is true. One morning I gossiped on the course with Mr. Charles Hutchings, the wonderful man who won the Amateur Championship at Hoylake in 1902, and who has known what nerves are since. He told me he has now been wintering at Pau for the last twenty years, and it is the only place that is any good to him. "Before I come to Pau, and even when I am at Biarritz," said he, "my nerves are like this"—and he slowly passed his right hand up along his left arm from the hand to the shoulder—"and when I am at Pau they are like this," he added, and he smoothed the arm back again from the shoulder to the fingers. It was as if he had been stroking a cat the wrong way and the right one—that was the idea. Biarritz, so very bracing, certainly makes you jumpy, and many of us have played far better at Pau than at Biarritz; in fact, we find that at Pau we can hit the ball as cleanly and with as much confidence as anywhere.

That reflection leads us when gazing abstractedly upon those Pyrenees, which are so good for thought, to consider the effect of climate upon one's game. Undoubtedly the effect is great, and yet it is neither appreciated nor properly considered. After working hard for a spell in town we say we will go for a weekend's golf, and, when we can, we choose a highly bracing place, because we believe it is good for us and "bucks us up." But do you remember how often the golf[Pg 317] that we play at such places is so extremely disappointing? The "bucking up" seems to have failed. Take Deal, for example. There is hardly a course in the world that I like and admire as much as this; but that strong air of Deal upsets the game of nearly every man at the beginning. Pau is supposed to be a little relaxing, but, except for the fact that we do not eat so much as at Biarritz, we hardly notice it. It soothes us, quietens us down, reduces our boiler and engine arrangements to low pressure, and *voilà!* our game comes on, and it does so because the question of playing well or ill by a man who knows the game is nearly always a question of the steadiness of his nerves, and there are fine shades of this steadiness that we do not always realise. That is why we play well at Pau, and it makes us think sometimes that the relaxing places have not had full credit for their golfing quality hitherto.

There is a general conspiracy among all things at Pau to rest and soothe the tired man. There are the bells. How can they affect the golf? you ask. See, then. We know of the fame in song of "The Bells of Lynn" and those of Aberdovey too; but it seems to me that the bells of Pau should have an equal celebrity. They are excellent. Alongside the hotel at which I stay at Pau a fine church steeple towers up, and there is in it a splendid belfry with skilful ringers to use it. Sometimes their performances wake us before our proper time in the morning, which is the first effect. Then on some days and nights the ringers practise a kind of bell music, which holds one spellbound. It begins slowly and quietly with a few hesitating notes in the bass. Soon there is an answering echo in the treble, and then it all gradually increases in time and volume until in three or four minutes a veritable torrent of stormy music is crashing out from[Pg 318] the tower and flinging itself out to the Pyrenees. And then it is as if the crisis passes, the bell music dies away again, and at the end there is but the thin little tinkle of a treble bell sounding lonely in the night. There are other fine belfries in the town; but, more than that, there are little churches all along the hill that frames our course on its northern side, and these have good bells as well, and they all chime the hours and the quarters—and all at different times! When one set of chiming begins just as you reach the green, you know that listening for the others will so much distract you that three or four putts may be needed, while the other man, being very phlegmatic, is down in two for a win again. There is one of these churches with its bells which has cost me many holes; its chime for the quarters is exactly the first four notes of the good old tune, "Home to Our Mountains." It strikes once for the quarter, twice for the half, three times for the three-quarters, and four times for the full hour, and, with the other two quick notes of the line missing, it always seems incomplete, and always irritates. If I am just about to swing when these bells begin to chime I see a catastrophe before me.

If there were no Pyrenees there would be no golf at Pau; I doubt if there would be Pau. Those glorious hills, beyond which are the castles and gold of Spain, make an almost matchless view, and they are so strong, so insistent, that they seem to dominate us in every consideration. If you should tell me that mountains that are more than twenty miles away can have nothing to do with the golfer's life and game, I ask you to go to Pau and be surprised. Those far-away hills give us rest, and they calm us to those moods of reflection to which, as golfers, we are so well inclined. From the window of my favourite room at Pau, I look right out on to the majestic chain, and[Pg 319] have the best view of it that is to be had. Below is the Boulevard des Pyrénées, more than a mile in length. Beyond there is a valley, and beyond that the Pyrenees rise up to one long wonderful white-topped line. Looked at in this way they seem so very near, and yet their nearest point is more than a dozen miles away, and there are peaks four thousand feet in height which seem within easy walking range, and yet are distant forty miles. From one end to the other we look out upon a length of some thirty miles of these peaks, and indeed the effect is most enchanting. This is the view that I get at its very best from my little window high above

the boulevard, and it is the view that brings scores of thousands of pounds of English money to be spent in the winter and the spring at Pau. It is a view that never palls, for it is never the same. To our eyes those great Pyrenees are always changing—kaleidoscopic in variety of shapes and colours. There are mysteries of the light and atmosphere about them which make for perpetual curiosity and wonderment. In the morning when we rise our first thought is as to what the Pyrenees will look like to-day, and gazing out from our little window we see them all done up afresh in new colours and shapes by Nature. They change as the hours pass, and then one is curious to know what new surprise the sunset will have in store. Sometimes in the morning they stand out bold in black and white, just as if they were plain and simple Pyrenees. In the middle of the chain two great points of peaks rise up from all the rest, and they are in the straight line out from the lofty window where I sit. They are the Grand Pic and the Petit Pic du Midi d'Ossau, and they are the pet favourites of all of us who gaze out southwards to the range beyond which the Spaniards dwell. The greater peak curls over a little at the top towards the lesser one, that seems[Pg 320] always to be snuggling up close to it, and they look to us always to be like a lover hill and his timid lady. Another morning all these mountains will be of a sapphire blue. Next day they may be rosy red. But the best effects are those of a phantom kind. Now and then those Pyrenees seem to have gone away to a hundred miles beyond, and we see them rather dimly, but still with their outlines well defined. They look like ghost mountains, and in imagination we can peer through them to a nothingness beyond. Yet more curious, there are mornings, fine and bright in Pau, with everything shining in the sunlight, when there are no Pyrenees at all! There is that little low range of hills in front, with the chalets and the chateaux all plainly to be seen, and the light seems as good as ever it was in southern France; but the Pyrenees, where have they gone? Not a trace of them is left, and we are lonely, disconsolate. It is as if a jealous Providence had wrapped them up in the night and carried them off to another land where their eternal solitude would not be hindered by the touring man and woman. But they come back again by night, and their gradual reappearance is a thing for happy contemplation. Yet for the greater glory and richness of colour the evening sunset effects are the best of all. Then from the corner at the right the setting sun shines along the hidden valley between the little hills and mountains beyond, and it is as if in that unseen place below, millions of fierce lights had been set burning and shining up the Pyrenees as rows of hidden electric bulbs are sometimes used to throw a soft, weird glow upon a ceiling and cause it to be reflected back again beneath. Then the Pyrenees are as an ethereal vision; their base is like a golden band and their tops like filmy gossamer, so that these seem to us to be not mountains of the world at all, but high hills of heaven itself. And away in the west the[Pg 321] sun sets in a burning Indian red, and the thin crescent of a new moon, with an attendant star, rises in the firmament. It is this that I look upon from my own crow's nest at Pau when my tramping of the day is done.

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One day at Pau a voice was raised in our little party and it said, "Let us get up closer to those splendid Pyrenees"; but another said, "Where should we get our golf?" It was answered that there was golf everywhere, and there must be some right alongside those white-capped peaks. Argelès! We remembered. It was advertised and well recommended as a good course, "open all the year round," and laid in the most delightful situation, the Pyrenees going up from its very edge. The prospect sounded well. We decided at night that on the morrow we would proceed with our bags of clubs to Argelès, and the porter at our hotel gave full directions for getting there, which made it seem a very simple business. It appeared that it was about thirty miles from Pau to Lourdes, and with the journey two-thirds done we were to change trains there. But, short as the distance was, it was to take us two hours. Our train would start at twenty minutes to nine in the morning. The match of the day, with four golfers implicated, was accordingly made overnight, and anticipation of the joys of Argelès became keen. All this was well, but when three of us had slept and were mightily refreshed, certain hitches and accidents began to happen. The fourth party to our contract still slumbered heavily at a quarter-past eight, and being then reminded, by sundry taps, of the prevailing circumstances, he muttered indistinctly that he was not to be tempted from his situation by the opportunity of playing two rounds on any course in Paradise. So[Pg 322] we left him snoring, piglike, there, and we were only three.

We got to Lourdes and descended from the train. Troubles arose forthwith. The station-master blandly observed, and as it seemed with a hardly hidden smile (how is it that non-golfers of all classes always do seem to be made happy upon the contemplation of a golfer being suddenly robbed of his game?), that there was no train from there to Argelès until the afternoon, the service which the hotel porter had in mind not beginning until three days later. By the same token the return train which we reckoned on was non-existent, and he expressed doubts about our sleeping that night at Pau if we persisted in what he could not help regarding as a very mad enterprise born of too much enthusiasm. We thanked him, and went out into the streets of Lourdes to see what could be done. Truly, we were only ten miles from Argelès, even if the road was through the mountains. And it was a fine day.

Suddenly, and as it seemed from nowhere, up came carriages from all parts of the compass, each drawn by a pair of horses, the coachmen all loudly soliciting the favour of driving us to Argelès, which they explained was fifteen miles away—a deliberate exaggeration. The first man to whip up to us asked for twenty francs for the single journey, and the others were amazed at his impudence. Another offered to take us for fifteen, and a third cabby came down at once to twelve. Then they all did so, and the market seemed to settle at that price, a great gathering of coachmen surrounding us and expatiating on the superior merits of their various horses and the comfort of their vehicles. It was a great spectacle, this golfers' carriage market at Lourdes! At last the first man to make an offer to us, suddenly, in a mood of desperation, came down to ten francs, and we closed with him, not so much because of the[Pg 323] saving of an odd franc or two, but because his pair of bays certainly did seem to have more fast trotting in them than any of the others. It was such a glorious journey down the valley of Argelès as golfers seldom make, huge, rocky, snow-capped mountains rising up from either side of the winding road. Leaving Lourdes there were two high hills on the left, one surmounted with a single cross and the other with three crosses of "Calvary" standing out clearly against the sky. Then, later, from the bottom of the valley a stumpy hill suddenly rose up in the middle, an old keep of mediaeval times on the top of it, and after that the great peak of the Viscos, with the pass to Gavarnie on one side of it and that to Cauterets on the other were presented. Soon afterwards we rattled down the little main street of Argelès, and lunched at the chief hotel. There was then a ten minutes' drive to the course, and our coachman—a local fellow, and not the one who drove us from Lourdes—stopped at various cottages on the way and shouted out inquiries as to whether Adolphe or Marie or Jeanne was at home. He was getting caddies for us, as he explained there would be none otherwise. Eventually from different places we picked up three—two little girls and a boy—who hung on to the back of the vehicle and proceeded with us to the appointed place. The course has great possibilities, but as yet they are thinly developed.

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[Pg 324]

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE GAME IN ITALY, AND THE QUALITY OF THE COURSE AT ROME, WITH A SHORT CONSIDERATION OF THE VALUE OF STYLE.

The other day, when we sat on the deck of a little steamer plying on the lake of Como, contented in warm spring sunshine with a sublime panorama of blue water and white-topped Alps, I was led to recall some of the few remarks which a shrewd and pungent commentator on life and men, the late Henry Labouchere, had made about our game, and, as he was not himself a golfer, and not the most tolerant of men despite his certain breadth of mind, it may be guessed that they were not complimentary to the game. We had left Varenna, and the little ship was paying its dutiful respects to Bellagio and Menaggio and such like places of an Italian fairyland. Hereabouts, as I remembered, Mr. Labouchere had lived in the proper season, and it came about some seven years back that a golf course—and a nice course too—was established near by, and the local hotel-keeper, in proper enterprise, ran a conveyance each day regularly at a certain time from his door to the club-house. Radical as he was—if he really was—Mr. Labouchere disliked this disturbance of the old peace and harmony of his lakeland retreat, and affected to see something vulgar in it. This wit and cynic, who once, answering an inquiry, said that he liked a certain lady of his[Pg 325] acquaintance well enough but would not mind if she dropped down dead in front of him on the carpet, certainly wished that golf had never grown into the human scheme of things, and he complained loudly of its invasion here. He suggested that Italy was now passing to the dogs. Had he lived a little longer he would surely have played at Menaggio, and we could have assured him then that golf in Italy was long before his time, and would certainly be of good help to the country for long after. It is one of the curious facts of golfing history that the game was played in Italy before any golf club, except one, was definitely established in Scotland, the only exception being the Edinburgh Burgess Golfing Society, and lo! it was played there by a Scot, and a Scot so good as the bonnie Prince Charlie himself. When I first went to the Villa Borghese in Rome, I remembered, on approaching it through the park, that when Lord Elcho went there in 1738 he found the Prince playing in the gardens. Many courses now exist in different parts of this beautiful Italy, and the country has begun to take its place in the great forward movement in European golf. It has begun slowly; but now, as I have seen it, does really advance.

A little fable is quickly told. A wise father had sent his son, for the good of his mind, to Rome, and when the boy returned he asked him what he thought of the city that is called eternal. Harold then answered, "I think, sir, that the lies at Rome are very good." Do not judge Harold harshly upon this answer, as you may be inclined to do. He might have come to know less of Rome had he not discovered that the lies on the Campagna were so good, and that the legions of mighty Caesar which were exercised there had left no enduring[Pg 326] marks of their galloping behind them. He might not have gained so many good Roman friends to tell him helpfully of the wonders of the city. And if golf is a little thing, and the contemplation of Rome is so enthralling, yet, be it murmured, the golf of Rome is one of the wonders of the golfing world. I have found it so. As it was to me, so it will prove a revelation to all golfers who go to Rome and have as yet no knowledge of the course that is there. For the full-bodied character of the holes, caused by natural land formations, and for their variety and interest, I do not hesitate to say that there is no course on the continent of Europe which is better, and I support this statement with another, that while I can hardly recall any hole where a bad shot will go unpunished or a good one without reward, yet in the whole round there is not a single artificial bunker. Nature has seen to all the tests and difficulties. Of what other course can this be said? Golf at Rome was begun in 1898, and ever since then there have been some fine golfing men working to what they were sure would be a successful end, chief among them being Mr. R. C. R. Young, who in the capacity of honorary secretary has been largely responsible for the general management of the club. Lately the round has been extended from nine holes to eighteen, Mr. Young and Doig, the professional, having done the planning of the new holes, and with this the golf of Rome enters upon a new era. The club flourishes, the golfing community, partly Roman, partly British, and partly American, is zealous, and the people there have come to believe that even the most serious, studious, and high-minded folk who go to Rome to steep themselves in living history of the past need for their refreshment some antidote to ruins. "St. Peter's, and the Colosseum, the Forum and the baths of Caracalla," said one of them to me, "will bring the foreigners to[Pg 327] Rome, but only golf will keep them there!" Count this for weakness in man, and for his utter modernity if you like; but it is the truth. Consequently the golf of Rome is entering upon a new forward movement. I think that when the public in distant places comes to realise that the golf of Rome is half as good as it really is, thousands and thousands more will go to Rome than do so now, to play upon the Campagna, and during the time to gather to their souls a scent of the glory of the ancient mistress of the world. I have a vision of Rome becoming a headquarters of continental golf in the near future.

On a morning after some days among the ruins—such a glorious morning, with the Italian sun burning gold amid a heavenly blue—two noble Romans came in their chariot for a barbarian wanderer at his hotel at half-past nine. They were not real Romans, but Augustus could have played their part of host no better, and a forty-horse-power car moved us towards the Campagna more speedily than the best of chariots. Away we went by the foot of the Equilinus, down the Via Emanuele Filiberto, through the gate of St. John Lateran in the Aurelian wall, and then straight on. In a few minutes we were at Acqua Santa and inside the club-house. Of all the club-houses in the world, this is surely one of the most curious and interesting. It is an old farm-house, skilfully adapted to its purpose, and we shall be sorry if in the course of time and a grand extension of the golf at Rome it is given up for anything more palatial and conventional. Here in an upper room we take the necessary nourishment in a simple way, and among other liquid refreshments there is the real *acqua santa* itself, a pleasantly bitter and quite delicious water that is drawn from a spring by a farm-house at a corner of the course. In days gone by the water was considered, perhaps not without good[Pg 328] reason, to have splendid curative properties, and popes of Rome came to it and blessed it accordingly. I believe that one of them derived some healing benefit from it. And now, as we think of popes and cardinals, we recall that one of the latter, Cardinal Merry del Val, had some kind of a course in his private grounds, and so far he has been the only cardinal golfer. Once before he died a scheme was afoot for a visit by him to the course at Acqua Santa. In a good and sensible and honest way the golf club of Rome is already a considerable social centre. Perhaps some day the King of Italy—already patron of the club—will join himself to the majority of kings and become a golfer too. A leading member of the famous historical family of Colonna, Don Prospero Colonna, is president, and a number of the most eminent people of Rome are among the members. Princes and princesses, counts and countesses, ambassadors of nearly all countries, and American millionaires may be found playing the game regularly at Acqua Santa. The keenest golfer of them all is Dr. Wayman Cushman, who is handicapped at plus 4, an American who spends half his year in Maine and the other half in Rome, where he plays golf nearly every day. The Americans are strong in the golf of Rome, and some of the young Italians are showing excellent form. There is one of them, Don Francesca Ruspoli, educated in England and son of a Roman father and American mother, of whom great golfing things are expected.

Really this is an excellent course; but the full merit of it will hardly be appreciated in the first round or the second, for the wonderful views and the special points of interest in them will constantly interfere with concentration on the strokes and thought upon the scheme for reaching the putting green. Standing upon the first



teeing ground and pondering for a moment upon[Pg 329] the carry to be made across the little valley in front, the panorama begins at once to suggest its superior claims. Leftwards are the Apennines, opalescent in the morning mist, capped with snow upon their peaks. There are the Alban Hills, where the shepherds were born who followed Romulus on the Palatine, and at the end of the range is Monte Cavo, on the top of which are the ruins of the temple of the god of the Latin races, living in the Latium, the ground between the mountains and the sea. On the wine-yielding bosom of these shining hills there lies sparkling white in the morning sun the village of Frascati. There are the Sabine Hills with Tivoli, and away in another direction there is Mount Soracte, well said to look out there like a wave in a stormy sea. Up into our middle distance on the left-hand side, on the fringe of the course, are the splendid ruins of the Claudian aqueduct which stretch right across the Campagna, one lonely pile coming close up to our sixteenth green alongside which the Via Appia Nuova stretches, with two famous umbrella pines helping on the scene.

There is so much for a beginning, and more views press upon us as we advance along the course. The play is opened with a good hole of drive and iron length, the second brings us back again with a drive and a pitch, and then away we go to the left with one of the cunningest seconds to be played across twin streams, making this third hole of Rome one of the most exacting in the way of approach that is to be found in Italy or even in the whole of Europe. When we come to the sixth we play up to the summit of a high tableland, and as we ascend the hill we pluck from the turf some of the freshest, prettiest crocuses that have ever grown, the course being as nearly thick with them in March as North Berwick is with daisies in the month of May. And from these heights what a[Pg 330] view again over towards the city of Rome! Out along that way there is the tomb of Cecilia Metella, Crassus' wife, and away on the boundary there is the church of St. John Lateran and the great dome of St. Peter's. If golf is a royal and ancient game, here is a setting for it. Near to the eighth hole we turned aside to the ruins of an ancient Roman villa, and Santino, my little Italian caddie, with finger excavation, gathered some morsels of polished marble which may have touched the feet of Roman ladies in those great days of old. The line of the tenth comes close to one of those deep-cut streams that flow to feed the hungry Tiber, and in some ways this hole reminds us of the fourth at Prestwick where the Pow Burn insinuates itself close to the golfer's way. At our backs when we stand on the eleventh tee is a cave that might serve for robbers but which really makes an excellent shelter, and it was related that a few weeks before my time in Rome three ambassadors, being the British, the American, and the Austrian, were seen to sit in there and shelter. And who then shall say that, if "only a game," golf has no possibilities and powers in such high crafts as diplomacy? The twelfth is an excellent hole, and so are they all. The sixteenth takes us winding round a big bend between a hill and a stream and then faces us full to the putting green, which has the Claudian ruins for a background. The play concludes with a seventeenth which has a putting green very shrewdly placed, and an eighteenth where the second shot is played through a little valley, these ending holes abounding in golfing beauty and character.

There is to be said of this course, and in the most sober and well-considered judgment by one who has seen golf in many lands, that there is scarcely an inland course anywhere that seems more naturally adapted to the game. Each hole has strong character of its own;[Pg 331] I could remember them all after but a single round. Some time soon they will make an attempt at Acqua Santa to carry their putting greens on from one season to the next, and then they will get a thickness and trueness and quality that greens can gain in no other way. The golfers of Rome are keen, and they have energy and enterprise. A great future awaits this club and course, and I believe that when more money is spent on it, as will be soon, it will be in nearly every thinkable way the most attractive course on the Continent. The mood that gathers about one when in Rome tends to taking the game rather more seriously and thoughtfully than at the Mediterranean resorts; it becomes a real recreation, the refreshing change. The club's nearness and convenience to the city are very good. It is but a few minutes' journey by either train or tram from the heart of Rome to the club-house, near which there is a special golfers' railway station.

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A Franciscan friar was the first to point out to me the situation of the nine holes of Florence—nine plain fair holes, though they have nothing of architectural beauty in them, not a trace of feeling, nothing of the mediaeval glow of spirit that separates this city from all others in the world, hardly a touch of imagination in their two or three thousand yards. Yet they serve their modern purpose well. For six days and six nights the rain had poured down upon the dripping Firenze from inexhaustible clouds; the saucer in which the city is laid emptied its floods into the Arno until, dirtier and more turbulent than usual, the big stream tumbled itself violently through the bridges. We wandered through the Uffizi Galleries and the Pitti Palace and the Bargello of courtyard fame. There is nothing in[Pg 332] the world like sweet Florence, and it is a hopeless soul that feels no spark of artistic fire crackle for at least one inspiring moment when the glories of this city that was born and lived to the human expression of beauty are contemplated. But an incessant rain provokes a bold defiance; there almost seemed to be a weakness in such constant shelter, and I remembered a suggestion that was sent to me from a far distance—

"Go up to Fiesole if you can." So in the car I went to Fiesole. We went out of the town and by San Gervasio, and wound past San Domenico, and twisted our way up the hill until, with five miles done, or it may have been a little more, the old Etruscan town, with the fragment of an ancient wall, was reached. At the very summit, where once a Roman castle stood, there is the Franciscan monastery. A brother in his umbrian gown looked meditatively outwards from the porch, and he was gracious and friendly when I told him I would like to go inside. From a loggia within we looked out upon one of the finest panoramic views of its kind. The rain had ceased. Grass was seen upon the Etruscan hills, tentacles of the Apennines came clear again through dissolving mists, and a golden light flamed up in the western sky. And in its peaceful hollow there lay Florence, the palace of art, a mediaeval jewel glistening there like a mosaic in white and terra cotta, with its great duomo in many-coloured marbles lording it over the lowlier piles. Florence! Sweeping the valley with a glance, the monk turned towards the north-east and, leaning upon a wall, he pointed with his right hand and said, "Pisa!" Over there was the city of the leaning tower and the baptistery with the amazing echo. But in the nearer distance there was a square patch of vivid green, and I traced its situation along there by the course of the Arno, by the Cascine, and other landmarks, and made nearly sure of what it was. The thought[Pg 333] was incongruous at the time, nearly inexcusable, but yet there is little in golf that is vulgar after all, and it could not be denied that there was the golf course out that way. By some careful questions I gained confirmation from the friar. I told him I looked for a place, a special place, whose locality I described precisely. And he held out his hand again. The golf course was nearly in the line of Pisa.

While so many things in Florence are four or five hundred years old at least, the golf course is only fifteen. Still, fifteen years makes a good maturity in these times, and Italy, if its courses are few, has some distinctions among them. Many continental courses depend for their attraction on their setting. Those of Florence and Rome have the most perfect setting conceivable, but while the course of Rome could live on its merits had there been no Rome, the course of Florence never could. Yet the city helps it out, and, though poor be the holes, here we have indeed one of the most enthusiastic little golf communities one might ever wish to mix among. The club is captained by Mr. J. W. Spalding, head of the great athletic business firm, who has ceased to live in America and lives now wholly in Florence, which he would hardly do were it not for this golf course, on which he plays nearly every day. Mr. Spalding is a fine example of the keen and determined golfer. A few years ago, in a terrible motor-car smash in Italy, he lost completely the sight of one eye. As soon as the surgeons and the doctors let him loose again he hurried to his favourite course at Florence and—think of it!—at once he won the scratch gold medal. He is a scratch man now, and plays as well as ever.

These and many other things I learned on the day after the monk had pointed out to me the direction of the nine holes of Florence, when I went along to San Donato to make a closer view of them, to drive and[Pg 334] putt at them. The golfers of Florence are a good company, managed with zeal by Signor Mavrogordato, in the capacity of honorary secretary. They are as keen and interested in their game as if they were at Sandwich, and they have a miniature club-house situated on a spot of land that has a cemented water-filled moat all round it, those who would enter having to pass over a little rustic bridge. The holes are plain with artificial cross bunkers, and the architecture is of what might be called the low Victorian school. One of the features of the course is a couple of tall trees that stand up in the middle with thin straight trunks parallel to each other, looking for all the world like Rugby football goal-posts. One great advantage that this course has is that it is splendidly convenient to the city. Take a tram-car No. 17 labelled "Cascine" from one particular corner of the cathedral square, say "Golf" to the conductor, pay him a penny for the fare, and the rest is inevitable. In a quarter of an hour you will be deposited at a junction in the roads by the barrier of Ponte alle Mosse, and two minutes' walk from there takes you to the iron gates which give admission to the course.

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There is the beautiful bay at Naples, and Pompeii, and a short voyage on the steamboat to the sweet isle of Capri; but golf has not yet come to Naples, though it will do so soon. When we travelled down there from Rome we were aboard a train that was taken by many of the Naples members of the Italian Parliament who were going home for the week-end—the "deputies' train" they often call that six o'clock from Rome. They had been having a fearful week of it, wrangling about their recent Libyan war and the cost of it, and their nerves were in rather a jagged state. I fell into conversation[Pg 335] with one of them, and he said that he wished he were a golfer, as from all that he had heard and understood it was the real and only thing for the soothing of a deputy after such scrimmaging and scratching as they had been having in the Chamber that weary week. He asked questions about our Parliamentary golfers, and was informed about Mr. Balfour, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, and all the others. I told this honourable member for Naples that nearly all our Parliamentarians played the greatest game of all, and that the Mother of Parliaments was all the better for it. He was impressed. He said there should be golf at Naples by the time I went there again—even if it was set there for the benefit of the tired members only!

Above all things, Venice is a place for reflection, and when we are there we think of all things we have seen and done in Italy, and shape exactly the impressions that have been made. One time there were two or three of us in a gondola. The crescent of a seven days' moon hung among the stars in the Venetian night. The gentle regular splash that was made by Giovanni Cerchieri, our gondolier (and be it said that his gondola is the blackest and smartest and most finely dignified of all that glide on the Grand Canal), as he swung backwards and forwards to his work behind us, with a sigh or a murmur that might have swollen to a real boat-song had we encouraged it, was nearly the only sound on the still waters. And in this Venetian night, an hour after the coffee, we were in the mood of men who feel that they are soon to return to the cold hard facts of life. The rest of Venice might go to glory; we, soothed amid such ease and comfort as might have satisfied a doge, turned our thoughts to the links of home. There was nothing incongruous in the association of ideas and facts. Venice we found to be splendid for meditation, and any place with such a quality, like the top of a mountain,[Pg 336] or the side of a purling stream, is a fine one for golfing consideration and conjecture. One man would talk of art, of pictures, and of sculpture; another would stupidly keep to golf. And then a compromise was suggested, when it was said that a question had once been asked as to whether there was such a thing as style in golf!

Any thoughtful player who ever had any doubt upon this matter—but, of course, no thoughtful player ever could—would have it dispelled if he went to Italy even though he never played a game, did not take his clubs, and never saw a golf course there. It were indeed better for his education in this matter that he should not play when on Italian ground, for one would not expect to find on the courses there the best examples of golfing style. The fact of style in golf would come home to him when he wandered through the galleries and looked upon all the magnificent sculptures that are among the matchless treasures of the country, though there is no study of a golfing swing among them. I do not see how any player of the game who is thoughtful and contemplative can go to Italy and fail to be enormously impressed with the lessons that are silently delivered from the sculpture in the galleries and museums of Rome, Florence, and other cities. In hundreds of pieces here we see the suggestion of beauty put forward in every movement and exercise of the human body, and particularly when the frame is being brought to some considerable physical effort, when the limbs are being placed upon the strain, are grace and rhythm and style exhibited to us, and with them there is the suggestion always of the extreme of power. There is indicated the close relationship between exact and graceful poise, perfect balance, and supreme controlled and concentrated force. The very utmost efficiency is always suggested in all this artistic balance. As the art is better and more[Pg 337] appealing, so the suggestion of power is increased and the marble almost seems to break with life.

Considered in this way, what a fine thing is the "David" of Bernini in the Borghese Gallery! But for our golfing suggestion some of the discobolus models serve us better. Without ever having attempted to throw a discus, one may very well understand that success at such an exercise depends almost wholly upon perfect balance and accurate concentration of force and true rhythmical movement, and in the models in the Vatican and the National Museums in Rome and elsewhere we see how it might be done. The discobolus of Myron, reconstructed as it has been, and with the head made to face in the wrong direction, so they say, is a magnificent thing. In the National Gallery of Rome they have made a reconstruction from a fragment of another, and they have made the figure to look sideways and half upwards to the discus held at arm's length behind him ready for the throw, whereas in the Myron the face is to the front and the eyes are down. (Though one may know nothing at all about the ways in which the discs were really thrown, or what is the best way to throw them, one is hardly convinced of the desirability of disturbing the head in the back-swing of the arm and letting the eyes follow the object in the hand. Surely concentration would be impeded and balance suffer.) But in these images we see the intensity of the relation between style and power, and we realise that if there were no style in golf there ought to be, and the next moment, that of all modern games golf is a game of style and nothing else. Perhaps you may play it without style, but then it is not the same thing, and it can never be so thoroughly effective and precise. Unconsciously, perhaps, James Braid had style in his mind when he said that at the top of the swing the golfer should feel like a spring coiled[Pg 338] up to its fullest tension, straining for the release. That is just what the discobolus suggests, and the golfer gets the fullest enjoyment from the game, the supreme physical thrills, when he feels this high tension for a moment and then its even, smooth, and quick escape, and he cannot feel it so when he has no style and all his movements and positions have not been made in perfect harmony. Some may say that the actions of the discobolus were probably not so very fine as the sculptors have made them out to be, and that much of the shape is merely artist's fancy, but probably they are fairly true to life. If they are not, one cannot contemplate them for more than a few moments without feeling that life ought to be true to them. The golfer in the suggestion of grace and power, as in the models that have been cut of Harry Vardon at the top and end of his driving swing, reaches some way towards the discobolus.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### THE AWAKENING OF SPAIN, AND SOME MARVELLOUS GOLFING ENTERPRISE IN MADRID, WITH A STATEMENT OF GOLFERS' DISCOVERIES.

"When we were in Madrid— " I have sometimes begun in conversation, and then invariably from one or more in the company there has been a quick interruption with— "But there can be no golf in Madrid! You do not go to Spain for golf!" But one who knows may answer that there is as good reason to go there for it as to most other places out of Britain, that in different parts of Spain there is fair golf to be had, that in Madrid there is a new course which is excellent and embraces some of the prettiest holes we would ever wish to play after passing by the Pyrenees, and that I have found there Spanish gentlemen to play with who have been among the happiest and most agreeable companions and opponents I have encountered. In a reflection upon my own experiences I dare to say that I would recommend a doubtful stranger to go to Spain only if he is a golfer, for by the agency of the game will the life and facts of the country be best presented to him, and mysteries be explained. The magic passport of golf is indispensable in all such circumstances. The truth is that it was golf that led me to Spain on my second visit to the country, and I had then one of the most interesting and [Pg 340] instructive holidays I have had in my travelling life, during which I had the opportunity of seeing something of the inside of Spanish life and government, of discovering truth about the forces that work in the regeneration of this old country, for really an awakening is taking place, and one dares to say the firm establishment of golf is a symbol of it. I had some interesting conversations with the Count Romanones, who was then the Prime Minister, with his brother, who is the Duke of Tovar, a man of broad sympathies who takes a leading part in many social movements of high importance in Madrid, and with other persons of much importance. These talks, with the open sight of all that was passing in Madrid, made a deep impression.

"You are a golfer, and we of Spain may give you some good golf to play!" said the Prime Minister cordially when by invitation I called upon him at his palace in the Paseo de la Castellana. He is a man of forcible appearance and manner. The face is thin, and its lines of character are strong—cold and strong. The aquiline features have something of Spanish—no Italian—fierceness about them, and the Count makes a piercing look which is considered discomforting to nervous strangers. But he is a very attractive companion in talk; his verve, his vivacity are wonderful. When discussing a subject in which he is interested his whole being becomes aflame; eyes sparkle and features quiver; he beats his fingers in the palms of his hands; he leans over towards you and gesticulates like an artist in enthusiasm. A man of hot nervous energy, one of keen purpose and determination is this statesman of Spain. He suggested that the new sports of his country were symbolic of her great awakening, of which he said he would talk to me that I might tell others what Spain is now and what she would be. "Europe does not [Pg 341] understand my country," he remarked, "True, there has been little occasion to understand her. But a change occurs. Spain at this moment is passing through a most remarkable process of transition. You are right in a suggestion you have made to me; unsuccessful wars do not cause interminable loss and disasters. The war with the United States was not all bad for Spain. We may have lost Cuba, but the development that has taken place since then in our country at home, in its agriculture and its mining, and again in its healthy natural feeling, has been enormous, and is a good substitute for many islands." And then he went on in a deeply interesting conversation to tell me of the great awakening of Spain indicated in many different ways, and of all her political, social, and other ambitions.

The Duke of Tovar, who is also coming to take an interest in the golf of Spain, smoked his cigar on a divan in his palace, and a Moorish boy brought coffee to us. The Duke travels much, and brings things and people back with him. I see that he has been an ambassador-extraordinary to the Pope of Rome and has received the most gracious papal thanks. A little of a statesman, he is much of an artist, and a marble bust of Alfonso *rex*, his own sculpture, casts a shadow beside us. In innumerable ways this Spanish nobleman associates himself with the life of the people, goes among them, attends their meetings, and he began telling me that one of the secrets of the new Spain was the important fact of the nobles taking to business, becoming the promoters and managers of industrial companies, as they were. He told me of dukes who were doing things. One of the new movements, in which he has assisted to his utmost and thoroughly believes in, is the boy scout movement, which has caught on like wildfire in Madrid. Three thousand Spanish boys were enrolled within a few weeks of the [Pg 342] establishment of the system in the city, and the Duke became a president of a section. All class distinctions are

avoided in this matter. "My son is going with the son of the porter," said the Duke of Tovar. And he most certainly believed in golf for the people, and would tell me stories of its beginning and its development.

As to Madrid, never was such a quick transformation accomplished in any city of the world, save when 'Frisco perished and was made again, as is being done here in the city on the plateau of Castile. The Spaniards having decided on the regeneration of their country and on persuading foreigners to come to it, have determined they must have a capital befitting a first-class power. The result is that Madrid is being torn to pieces and rebuilt. Everywhere there is a fever of building raging. Think of it: but three years ago and there was not a single first-class hotel in Madrid; now there are two fine ones. The Alcala, where the Madrileños stroll and mount up the hill to the Puerta del Sol, the great bare square where the idlers lounge, where the bull-fighting papers are sold, where there are many offices for the sale of lottery tickets, where there are cafés and yellow tramcars (run by Belgian companies, if you please!) and much life but no gaiety until very late at night, is soon to be deposed from being chief street of Madrid, for they are making a new ideal street, very wide and one mile long, which is cut straight through the heart of the city and is to be called the Gran Via when it is done. Millions and millions of pesetas' worth of property have been demolished to allow for the straightness of this street, which is to ask for comparison with a part of the Fifth Avenue across the water. Thirty-seven millions of pesetas were lately voted by the Municipal Council for the removal of the cobble stones of Madrid, their places to be taken by asphalt and wood. The cobbles of [Pg 343] Madrid are picturesque; they make good harmony with those antique watchmen who seem to have been reincarnated from our own eighteenth-century London, walking the slumberous streets at night, lanterns in their hands and jangling bunches of giant keys suspended from their girdles, their business being to open the outside doors of blocks of flats for late-returning occupiers who in an unthinking languorous way of Spain would carry no keys, but leave the affair of their homecoming to the fortune of the night, the vigilance of the watchman, and the blessing of Providence. But the cobbles are not convenient. They are seldom repaired, and even in such a spacious public place as the Prado, which is a kind of Hyde Park Corner, there are sometimes deep holes which fill with water when it rains and make such pools as ducks might like and dogs would drink, but which take a leg of mine some way upwards to the knee when the night is dark. There was an old Madrid of which trills of love and passion have been sung. Fevered lovers sang to ladies whose lips were red, and whose skin was dark, as their hearts were gay—voluptuous women. Guitars and flowers; blood and life. That Madrid has nearly passed away. A few steep and narrow streets and some dirty open spaces, with little of the delicate charm of age to recommend them, are most of what is left of it in a quarter near to the royal palace. The city of later times, the Madrid of to-day, is already and quickly giving way to a third Madrid which will soon be made.

In this that I have written I may seem to neglect my theme, and yet the state of Spain does most closely concern the strange case of golf in the country. Here is an answer to interrupters who are quick to say that one does not go to Madrid for golf. When Spain was all romance and colour, all dirt and laziness, [Pg 344] it was no place for games like this. Bicycles were not popular then because they had to be pedalled ceaselessly, or the riders would fall: they, being as symbols of action, did not permit of lounging or a little slumber. In the days of the first and second Madrids, athletics could not be contemplated; the corrida was supreme and solitary for Spanish "sport." Now there is an athletic movement. There are many football clubs; there is a national cup competition and the King has given the cup. Still the corrida flourishes, but it is threatened. In the new movement for the third Madrid there are social clubs such as we have in London. There is an inclination for strong, healthy sport, and the King encourages it with all his royal might and influence. Don Alfonso has been the good leader of the royal game in Spain. The main point is that golf in these days is a token of a healthier disposition and a new progress, and it is a strong influence upon character. In the old Spain such a sport as this was quite impossible; now it grows, and, to me as one who has considered the birth and rise of golf in many countries, the case of Spain is deeply interesting. When I went there I remembered what some of the thoughtful and candid Americans had said about this game exerting a needed and subtle influence upon their own national character. It is such influences that are needed in Spain, and I shall go again among the Madrileños to see this one in the working. Already they have courses, nice and tolerable, in Barcelona, Bilbao, and many other provincial places. When I went to San Sebastian, one of the most beautiful and fully equipped seaside resorts in the whole world, the municipal authorities assured me that they felt a fear that the bull-fights were becoming a doubtful attraction to foreign visitors, and they were giving their attention to the establishment of a [Pg 345] municipal golf course. It will be the first municipal golf course on the continent of Europe.

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Let me plunge to my revelation and state that Madrid, in New Castile, land of the toreador, country where so much of the Middle Ages does yet survive, where games till lately have been almost unknown, this Madrid comes now to be possessed of such a first-class course as might be the envy of many a British seaside resort.

While I lingered in the city Señor Fabricio de Potestad, one of the most active members of the general committee of the Madrid Golf Club, and of its green committee too, was a kind counsellor and guide. Just as might happen at home, while at breakfast at the Ritz there came to me notice that the car was waiting. Señor de Potestad, his clubs and mine inside the car, had the golfer's expectancy upon a genial Spanish countenance, rubbed hands, and declared it was a fine day for the game. We sped away from the Prado, and considered handicaps and odds as golfers must. But first we went for object lessons in the progress of Spanish golf. Three or four miles out we reached the hippodrome where some nine years back the game was born. Don Alfonso had been learning golf in England; he had striven with it in a left-handed way while he wooed a British princess in the Isle of Wight, and he gave a Spanish decoration then to the professional who showed him how to hold his hands and where to put his feet. Then nine simple stupid little holes were laid out in this hippodrome, and there they still remain as relics of the earliest age in the golf history of this country, the uncultured time when the ball was missed, the days when a hole in nine might have been considered good and a[Pg 346] seven enough to make the soul of a great grandee quiver with a new found joy. Three Spaniards stood forward with the King as the pioneers of Spanish golf, and still they are among its leaders. There was a great sportsman, the Duke of Alva, president of the club; there was the Marquis de Santa Cruz, and there was the Señor Pedro Caro, perhaps the only Spanish golfer of early times besides Don Alfonso himself who learned his strokes and swings in England, where he was schooled, and who with the Count de la Cimera and the Count Cuevas de Vera, cousin of my guide, is one of the three best players of Spain. Two of them are Spanish scratch, and the Count de la Cimera lately achieved the distinction of being the first of his land to rise to the eminence of plus one. Thus you may perceive that the golf of Spain is helped by the best people, and that is not because it is fashionable, and it is not only because the King has shown a liking for it, but because the Spaniards have found in it a quick fascination, an awakening pastime, such a strong diversion from the often heavy life of their country as they had not imagined. Had you seen, as I did, the Duke of Aliaga bunkered one afternoon before a high steep cliff in front of the eighteenth green on the second oldest course of Madrid; had you seen him pensive as he felt the extraneous sorrows of a Spanish nobleman of riches and high station; had you seen the gleam of gladness in two Spanish eyes when the ball was heaved somehow to the top in one (the gods may know how he managed it; but we said to him that it was a splendid shot, and I do believe it was!) you would not doubt that golf was meant for Spain as these people declare it was—"the thing of all others that we needed," so they say.

This second oldest course, the "old course" as they begin to call it now, marks the transition period of[Pg 347] Spanish golf. It is not the primeval course of the hippodrome, but one which was made in 1907 at a place apart and a little farther along the road. The land is worth a million and three-quarters of pesetas now when Madrid has become so much bigger than it was, and the course falls within the city zone; and as the players became educated they yearned for something better, and they moved again. But fond memories will cling for long enough to this old course of Spain; with a little help from fancy one may look upon it even now as a kind of old Blackheath of Spanish golf. There is a small club-house with dining-room, dressing-rooms and all complete, in quite the English way, on a spot of rising ground, and from the verandah we may look over a part of the course, with a short hole to begin with and some curious bunkering here and there, with a highly modern attempt to adopt the system of humps-and-hollows bunkering that has been so well established on inland courses at home. Somehow one gathers the impression that the Spaniards have been striving all the time towards some kind of indistinct ideal, realising that the sport they had discovered was a great one and trying to improve their practice of it. And I recall that it was J. H. Taylor, the old designer, the old constructor, the quintuple champion, who was pioneer in the planning of courses in Madrid, and he laid out this one of eighteen holes very well for the early Spanish golfers.

One of the curiosities of the course is the putting green at the eleventh hole, which is quite round and is surrounded by an evenly shaped earthen rampart. On seeing it for the first time the average Englishman observes to the Spaniard who is with him, "How like a bull-ring!" The remark is justifiable and it seems appropriate; but the Spanish gentleman has heard it many times. Playing the bull-ring hole is a satisfying[Pg 348] experience, most exceedingly contenting. We play what we shall consider a perfect approach shot to our Plaza de Toros hole. The ball is pitched into the ring just over the near side of the barricade. A big bound and it is by the hole side, a smaller skip and it is away to the other side of the circle, and then there is one nervous little jump up towards that enclosing height. The perplexed ball seems in our fancy to claw up the steep slope, which is about four or five feet high; it nearly reaches the top. We, the player, feel a little pitter-patter in the heart. Is that little white bull of a ball of ours going to get over the fence and spoil the thing? It should not; we pitched him as nicely as human skill could ever pitch. He is vicious; but he is spent. The gay life which he had at the beginning of the stroke is flickering out. He cannot escape. Our cuadrilla of one, the little Spanish lad with the bag of clubs, advances and hands the putter, taking back the mashie which has done its business. The ball comes trickling back from the bank—back and back, and it comes on to within some seven or eight feet of the side of the hole. Then it falters and stops, done for. Meanwhile there is another white bull of a ball only four feet away; this also had come back from the bank, but a little more. I, as an espada, take my steel putter for the finishing touch. I see

the line, I have the momentary hesitation, the nerves are tightened, and then I make the stroke, and happily it is a good one. The ball has gone down. In truth both balls go down, and "Four, señor!" and "Four—a half, *amigo!*" and the play to the eleventh hole of old Madrid is done. Even if there is a slope to the hole and there is the bull-ring rampart round it, we say that a four at this piece of golf is good. We also argue out that bull-ring with our consciences. I have seen nothing like it. It was clearly the object of [Pg 349] those who made it to pen the ball up towards the hole, to make the golf a little easier, for it was found to be hard enough (as you and I have found it hard enough at home) to catch the ball and keep it and lead it to its hole. This hole, the rampart, seems to be a concession to the frail humanity of man. Conscience murmurs chidingly, "You know, you English golfer, that you should never have been so near to that Spanish pin! You should have been bunkered, my friend, perhaps badly bunkered, beyond the green!" But being in Spain, and doing as Spaniards do, we are a little independent, have a freedom of idea, and with some peevishness of manner, an arrogance, a way as of telling conscience to attend its other business and get back to London—where in some places they do place bunkers and hills upon the greens to keep the golfer, as it seems, from holing out at all—I retort, "I played a good shot anyhow; I only just pitched over the bull-ring fence; I pitched the ball up high and let it drop straight down, and cut every leg from it that it ever had. No man could do better with the ground so hard. It was right that the ball should come back."

I shall hope that with their attachment to a new love that is so beautiful and good, the Spaniards will not give up their old course here that has served them faithfully and brought on their game. Besides, it is a course that is pretty in its situation. Away beyond, many miles away, are those snow-topped Guadarrama Mountains, fine rough things. Though it was March, and untruths are told about the wickedness of the Spanish climate, we lunched with Señora Elena de Potestad in the open outside the club-house in warm sunshine glistening on a pretty scene. Señora Elena is quite the best lady golfer of Spain; but writing the truth as she told it, the charming wife of my friend is not Spanish, but is a Russian lady from Khieff. I [Pg 350] suspect her of being the best Russian lady golfer and the best Spanish too; it is curious. She has done the first nine holes here at Madrid in something less than bogey. Next to her on the championship list is the Marquesa de Alamoncid de los Oteros, six strokes behind. Queen Victoria sometimes plays, and I have seen that extremely popular lady of Spain, the Infanta Isabella, golfing here with the professional and a maid of honour. The game is doing well with the ladies of the peninsula; they like it. I had a gentle argument with the Señora Elena, who seemed a little doubtful whether golf were quite a ladies' game, for all her own skill and love for it. She pleaded the other feminine occupations and interests, even the distractions, and the difficulty of surrendering to the tyranny of golf. In her view it seemed to be of the ladies' life a thing apart, while we have known it to be a man's complete existence.

As our speedy car skimmed the road on the way back to Madrid that night, Señor Fabricio would talk of the good influence of the game, and the special benefits that it might and did confer upon his hopeful countrymen. "Twelve years ago," he reflected, "I might meet all my friends at the *corrida*. All were for the bull fight—and the ladies too. But now—if I went myself, as I do not—I should see none. They are all for golf. At my club in Madrid we say one to another about the time of lunch, 'Do you go to golf this afternoon?' It used to be, 'I suppose you go to the *corrida*, eh?'" One thinks and wonders.

I took tea in the lounge at the Ritz, and gossiped with a man who had just come along from Portugal and told me of some exciting times they had been having there. They had decided on having more golf, and were about to make a municipal matter of it near Lisbon. Hitherto, as I knew, they had had only one [Pg 351] golf course in the whole country, and that was at a place called Espinho, some eleven miles out from Oporto, and it was said that bulls intended for the fights were fed up there and did their roaming exercise on this course. It is not a comfortable idea. The new course is out at Belem on the banks of the Tagus near to Lisbon, and this is the exact place at which Vasco de Gama landed on returning from his greatest voyage of discovery. It is an eighteen-holes course; it has been well planned; and much money is being spent on it. The Portuguese having started a new form of government and begun a new national life—as they hope—have come quickly to the conclusion that they need golf and much of it, for already a second course for Lisbon is being arranged, and there are to be others in different parts of the country. If King Manoel goes back, he will be prepared for them, for he has cultivated a fair game at Richmond.

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In the evening we went to stroll among the cafés of Madrid, and presently peered into the old parts of the city, where life is simple and strong, where the humbler Madrileños resort, and there are dancing entertainments of a strange kind. On a little stage there is some jingling music worked out from a bad piano, and a troupe of girls with some gypsies among them will make a dance that, for all its art and all its naïveté, is somewhat coarse. Other girls will sit round them in a semicircle and keep up a kind of barbarous wail, occasionally bursting into a mock shout of approval. A song will follow, and a chorus with it, and by and by the entertainers will descend

and drink wine with the people in the café, and all this will continue until the night is very late. But out in the Puerta del Sol the lights are bright and there is more[Pg 352] gaiety than there has ever been. So we wandering golfers, reckless of the game of the day that follows (after all we are to give a bagful of strokes to these Spaniards and can beat them yet—but not always, one remembers), turn in to one of the music halls which have three shows a night, the third beginning at midnight, and we see La Argentinita dance, see the rumba done. Then down the Alcala and over the Prado home. We shall insist that this is a part of our golf in old Madrid; it is not the conventional golfing holiday, as I try to show. Another day we will run out for many miles to El Escorial (thanking the Duke of Tovar for the offer of his car) and ruminate in this most sombre architectural creation of the great Philip—palace, monastery and tomb in one—and another day out to Toledo, a grand dead city of a long past of many phases and eras, a mummified city it seems to be, with halls and places that look sometimes as if they had but just been left by the rich grand caballeros of the time when Spain was great. You can nearly see their ghosts, gay in satins and crimson silks, leaning over flowered balconies, singing, kissing, laughing, and always living.

I dislike the corrida. It is horrible. Its time has gone. I had enough of it once when south at Algeciras. But a Spanish golfing companion said that it was a very special day, and for the experience, and as a matter of being guest, I should go. There were eight bulls done instead of six, and horses in proportion, and a county councillor of Madrid took us behind all the scenes, into the hospital, into the matador's chapel, and explained everything. He was a courteous gentleman. He said they would have golf in Madrid, that the corrida would leave in time, but for the present the people must have the corrida. It takes time to make great changes, he said, even in Madrid—where it does[Pg 353] take more time for movements than anywhere else. But the point of this reference is the harsh contrast that is indicated—our peaceful game of golf in which nothing is killed, no blood spilled, nobody hurt, and yet, as we think, the greatest, fullest sport of all, stirring the emotions better than any corrida in Madrid or Barcelona, and this awful feast of blood and death. I have seen golf in many places, but never in one where its setting seemed so utterly impossible as here. And yet golf in Madrid is strengthening, and by ever so little the corrida, so they tell me, is weakening. That the game can begin and can hold and grow in such a place is surely the utmost testimony of its power. Games like golf have some work to do in Spain. It is because of such considerations, because of the extraordinary environment in which this peaceful, excellent sport is set, that I have found golf in Madrid such a remarkable and interesting study, and have dwelt upon it and provoked the contrasts when I might.

See contrast now again, yet more wonderful. The next morning broke bright and blue, and Señor Fabricio was round betimes in the Prado with his car. We were to go to the new course that day. We sped away on the Corunna road for some four or five miles from Madrid, and then turned up towards the higher land. All this was King's land; El Pardo it is called. Here is the new golf course of Madrid, which takes the place in the Spanish golfers' hearts and plans of the other one of which I have already written, that with the bull-ring hole. This of El Pardo is part of a great new sporting establishment, embracing a magnificent polo ground, tennis courts, and all the advantages and appurtenances of a thorough country club in the manner of those which began in America and have since been copied in England, and more recently at Saint-Cloud near Paris.[Pg 354]

Considered in some ways I am a little disposed to count this new golf course of Madrid as the eighth or ninth wonder of the whole golfing world, just as the Spaniards themselves set up a claim for El Escorial to be ranked as the eighth of the world at large. There are sound reasons for the nomination. I have shown that it might well have been held that the Spanish people's character and dispositions were a soil in which no good game might grow, and yet that it was being urged and proved that there was a great process of regeneration going on and that golf indeed had been given a very good start. Now we come to the astonishing climax for the time being in this little story of contrasts. Here, if you please, at El Pardo on the estates of Don Alfonso is just one of the nicest, best, and most interesting courses for golf on which the excellent game might ever be played. It is quite new and it is most thoroughly up to date. It is a course of which good clubs in Britain might be exceedingly proud. You and I would be glad to play there nearly always, and we should have little fault to find. When I was there it was only just being finished. Its history is a nice romance. The golfers of Spain had risen to that state when they felt they needed something better for the improvement and the enjoyment of their play than the rough primitive course with the bull-ring hole which had ceased to satisfy their needs and tastes. They were restive. Came Don Alfonso to their comfort and their happiness. At El Pardo was the ideal golfing land—wide undulating sweeps of lovely country, majestic undulations, grand environment, with the splendid Guadarramas in full view. It was a scene sublime. The land was wooded, trees would have to be felled, the ploughshare would have heavy work to do; but that is how courses are made to-day. Not in Don Alfonso's power was it to give the ground[Pg 355] outright, but he passed it to the golfers for a nominal rent of a thousand pesetas a year, which, being converted to English reckoning, would be some £37. There was land for the polo and the tennis hard by. Estimates were procured, and it was discovered that to do the work of felling and ploughing, sowing and construction, building and finishing, a sum of just about twenty-two thousand pounds in English money would be needed, and most of



the money would go to England too. Then with zest the golfers and other sportsmen of Madrid came forward, each one subscribed according to his means and ability, and in a very little while all that great fund of money was obtained, and it was in the bank before the work was started. That was a splendid achievement; the golf of Madrid deserves to prosper now.

It was determined that with such a beginning everything should be done most thoroughly afterwards. Thousands of trees had to be cut down, the ground cleared, ploughed, and raked, and the putting greens sown. On hardly any course in any country has the work of construction been done more thoroughly. Then Mr. Harry Colt was brought from England to design the holes, and he gave of some of his most cunning, most artistic work, having a fine field for his quick imagination. The result is eighteen holes as good and rich as Spanish holes need be. Some of the short ones are as good short holes as I have seen. One with the green on a hog's back, the seventh, is a most appetising thing. At the third there is a quick slope on the left of the green and the approach is one of those twisty things that are a strong feature of the Coltian style of architecture, demanding a skill and calculation from the player that many bunkers would not exact. There is a dog-leg hole for the fifth that leads to a green partly framed in a corner of trees.[Pg 356] Parts of Spain are treeless, the great plain above which Madrid is placed, the long lone sweep of land that you look down upon from the palace, down to the Manzanares and beyond to a far horizon, is one of the most desolate countries that my eyes have seen. But here at El Pardo there are trees enough. Chestnuts and cork are everywhere, and the course has a look of our sweet Sunningdale at home. Harrows, rakes, and spades have done their work most wondrous well, and the nicest gradients have been given to the putting greens. But there is something even more remarkable still that has been done. Make it as you would, tend it as you might, but if Nature were to be depended upon the loveliest course in all Spain would have to perish, for the climate forbids. So the climate had to be foiled. Water was needed, water everywhere, water always, always. The Madrid golfers, wise beyond all British example, determined they would have their water at the very beginning of things. Some way distant there was a river or canal, and it was tapped for their supply. Great cemented aqueducts were built to carry it across valleys; it was piped through hills. The water in abundance was brought up here to the course; and it was laid on to every teeing ground and putting green and to the entire fairway so that everywhere, always, the water should be poured on, the fine grass that grows should be kept always green, and the turf, which is of full sandy kind, should be always golf-like and moist. That was a splendid achievement. I enjoyed the round of the new course, delighted in a pretty valley hole towards the end, and admired the enterprise of the Spanish golfers exceedingly. They have golf in Madrid. As the express climbed with me upwards back to France I reflected again on these wild contrasts, and the struggle for light by Spain.[Pg 357]

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As a pursuit golf differs from all others in that there is no exclusively right way and no utterly wrong way of doing anything connected with it. Those engaged with it are constantly, to use their own expression, finding out what they are "doing wrong," and then with great eagerness and activity and newly revived hope are setting forth to repair their errors and place their game upon a new foundation. Yet despite this eternal discovery of faults and remedies, only a little is ever found out of the full truth that is hidden somewhere, by even the very best of players, and herein lies the consolation of the humbler people in that, if they know little, their superiors, being champions, know only a little more compared with all that there is to be known. Thus upon every disappointment an encouragement ensues. If these points are considered it will appear that there are deep truths in them, while at the same time they convey morals and point the way to a betterment of one's game. And the most important point is that there is no one exclusively correct way of doing anything, and this, with all the circumstances surrounding the proposition, leads us inevitably to the conclusion that this is no game for narrow-minded and conventional people, who would always do as others do, and have not the will to exercise their own convictions which, along with their admiration for some of the tenets of the political party to which they do not belong, are stifled in their consciences and put away. Golf is indeed a game for extensive individualism, for the free exercise of convictions and for continual groping along unknown channels of investigation in search of the truth. Those who do not investigate and explore in this way miss a full three-fourths of the intellectual joy[Pg 358] of this pastime. And the investigators must have the courage to reject things of information that are offered to them, even when conveyed with the very highest testimonials for their efficacy from the best champions of home and foreign countries, while at the same time they should have the will to put into exercise even the most fantastic scheme of their own imagination.

All dogmatic teaching in golf is wrong. There are two or three essential principles as we have called them—the keeping of the still head, the fixed centre in the body, the eye on the ball, and such like—which must be obeyed under the certain penalty of failure, because these might be said to be the laws of Nature as applied to golf, and have nothing to do with the eccentricities of human method. But, these being properly respected, there are

innumerable ways of building upon them structures of golf which, in the goodness of results in the matter of getting threes and fours and winning the holes, are much the same at the finish. One of the structures may be precise, another may be plain, a third may be ornate, and a fourth may be rough and vulgar. Yet in efficiency and in results they may be just the same, and in most cases the man is led to his style of golf building largely by his own temperamental case. So long as the essential principles are observed in each case, being the same always but kept hidden in the recesses of the building, many things may be done that the books do not teach. The books are valuable to the utmost for their suggestions and for bringing the player back to his base, as it were, when he has wandered too far in his explorations, piled theory on theory and got his game into the most hopeless tangle. For corrective purposes they are in this way quite essential. They stand for the conventions and for the middle ways; they enable us to make a fresh start. And the golfer is always making fresh starts. What is the cherished [Pg 359] belief of to-day is abandoned next week, the discovery just made and looked upon as solving the last problem that keeps the handicap man away from scratch, is found later to be a temporary convenience only and to be dependent on something else in the system of a highly fleeting and uncertain kind. These beginnings, this starting over again with increased hope, add always to the pleasure.

What players need to remember above all things is that the games of no two men are quite alike, any more than the men themselves are quite alike, and that among the very best the widest dissimilarities exist, that the best game that any man can possibly play is not one copied from others, but that game which is his very own, the one built up on his physical, intellectual, and mental peculiarities. Every man has a game of his own somewhere which is quite different from any other, and that game, when he can play it, will be more effective than any other that he could play. What he has to do, therefore, is to find out that game in all its peculiarities, and this is what the explorer and investigator is constantly trying to achieve. He is finding out the mysteries not of the game in general, as he sometimes imagines, but of his own game, and the more he discovers the better is he as a golfer. Surely there is proof enough of the absolute soundness of this proposition in the fact that the discoveries as they are made, meaning not those which are found later to be worthless, but those which become established in the permanent system and are invaluable, are often absolutely opposite to those made in another case and which become permanent in the same way. Why, even the champions differ more widely than any others—yet one remembers that this should not be a matter of surprise, but something that by this argument is quite inevitable. The champions have been marvellously successful in the mining of their [Pg 360] own golfing seams, and that is the chief reason why they are champions. And all this helps to make golf the game it is—the eternal finding out, the progress, with its occasional set-backs, towards the discovery, the completion of the golfing self. I have only met one man in my life who has golfed and never found anything out, and that was Mr. John Burns, the Minister of State, who assured me that once in the old days of the Tooting Bec course he was persuaded by a number of political persons to go with them to play the game there one day. He had never handled a golf club in his life, but having some practical knowledge of cricket, felt that golf could not offer any serious hindrance to him. Consequently he agreed to take his part in a foursome, and in the progress of this match usually drove the best ball, with the result that his side was well victorious. There seemed nothing in his game that needed improvement. Herein we observe Mr. Burns displayed many of the qualities of the highest statesmanship, but he rose majestically in his determination that from that day he would never play golf again, much as he liked it, and he never has. He has these three distinctions—that he has played golf once and once only in his life; that being a golfer, as all are who are once initiated, he has never lost a match; and that he has never found anything out. I shall hope to be present at the second game he plays, the resolution having broken down, and then we shall see discoveries made.

But once again, "Golfer, know thyself" is the supreme moral drawn from the experiences of the players who have golfed and studied most. Every golfer worth the name has found out hundreds of things and hopes to find many more; some of them are quite different from any of the other things that have been found out; he has his own private collection, and in it almost any person might find something that [Pg 361] might with a little alteration be added to his own. So I remember that when we came up out of Spain, where the golfers are in that happy state that they have at this present stage almost more to discover than any other golfers in the world, a new spring season was beginning in the homeland of the game and all players were looking over their stock of knowledge and seeing what they had found out in the most recent times. It occurred to me then to send out a demand to a number of good players whom I knew for their enthusiasm, for their individualism and their strength of mind, and for their conscientious investigations, and ask them what they had lately discovered in an original kind of way which had beyond question materially improved their game. The answers were enlightening, and some of them, which I may quote, are worth pondering upon. One of the best players of my acquaintance sent to say that he had made a discovery, which, applied as a resolution, had done him more good than any other half-dozen he had ever thought of. The essence of the new idea was that on the teeing ground especially, and when approaching his ball through the green, he would see to it that the stepping of the feet, the movements of the arms, hands—everything involving action—should be as slow and deliberate as possible, even the very speech itself, for the reason that this slow sureness created an irresistible tendency in the golfing action that was to

follow, the back-swing was then slow and deliberate, and the whole movement was harmonious and precise. The probable value of this idea is suggested by the fact that the man who is slow and deliberate in his wagging—not meaning one who prolongs it unduly or does it in a hesitating way—generally does his swinging better. Another player said the best discovery he had ever made was the idea of imagining his weight during upswinging to be on[Pg 362] his left foot without really throwing it there, at the same time holding his legs a little more stiffly than had been his wont and keeping his heels on the ground as long as he could. By these things, which could all be grasped in the one general idea of making himself conscious of his legs all the time, he has come by a firmness and steadiness of system that have added enormously to his driving capacity; in fact, it has converted him from being a man who could not drive at all to a very good driver indeed.

I remember that once I was watching Taylor teaching a scratch man and giving him hints for curing some considerable cutting and slicing to which he was addicted. The champion turned round to us and said that one of them was the best tip he had ever suggested in his life. It is the simplest thing. In addressing the ball he would have the patient turn over the face of the driver until that face is positively hanging over from the top, pointing to the turf, at such a fearsome angle—no limit to it—as to make it seem impossible to do anything but smother the ball when coming down on to it. The back-swing has to be begun with the face in this threatening situation. The truth is that the nervous fear that it inspires is the secret of the success of the method. The man believes that if he comes down on to the ball like that there will be a horrible disaster, and all the time in the down-swing he is subconsciously (another to that long list of most important subconscious movements) making corrections and allowances, and his wrists are doing a twist to get the club right by the time of impact. It is this wrist action, with the left hand managing it, that is wanted, and the arm action that it induces. The club reaches the ball properly, and the ball goes off without a slice. If sometimes it is smothered it does not matter; the cure[Pg 363] will take effect in time. But, you say, you do not want to go on for ever addressing the ball in this seemingly grotesque way. No; but, again subconsciously, when the ball is being hit and driven properly and the arm and wrist action become natural, there is a sure tendency towards a settling down to normal ways, and without the man bothering about it any more the club will gradually get itself straight.

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## CHAPTER XV

### THE SUPERIORITY OF BRITISH LINKS, AND A MASTERPIECE OF KENT, WITH SOME SYSTEMS AND MORALS FOR HOLIDAY GOLF.

The chief and essential difference between golf in Britain and all other places in the world, as everybody feels on coming home to it after wanderings with clubs abroad, is that here in the home of the game it is "the real thing" as nowhere else. Climate, soil, history and sentiment, and the temperament of the people have combined to make golf here a thing that foreign people who have never seen and enjoyed it cannot imagine. It is not only that its excellence is so great, but its variety so infinite; and perhaps it is because of that excellence and variety that, human nature being in such a constant state of discontent, our people in these days are so much concerned with problems of architecture and the attainment of ideals which vary much with individuals and cause incessant wrangling. It is when we are far away that we think most of the magnificence of the courses on the western seaboard of Scotland—Prestwick, Troon, and Turnberry among them, with Machrihanish and Islay in more lonesome parts—of the wealth of golf in that East Lothian district that is so amazingly crowded with fine links, of the splendid strength of such as Hoylake and others in Cheshire and Lancashire, of our own east coast with such jewels as Brancaster[Pg 365] set in it, of that marvellous trinity of courses on the Kentish seaboard, which as a golfing land has surely not its match in the world—Sandwich, Deal, and Prince's, in the group—of Littlestone and Rye along the southern coast, and then in the west such a glorious golfing ground as Westward Ho! And there is Wales with its pretty and excellent Porthcawl, Ashburnham, and many more, and Ireland also with its great Dublin courses, Portmarnock and Dollymount, and then sweet Newcastle in county Down, and bold Portrush.

Indeed there are no others like the British courses, and it is always a tremendous speculation with any golfer of experience as to which he likes the best. When he comes to make it he has to separate in his mind the feelings of admiration and those of affection, for it commonly happens, if the judgment is reasonably good, that one may

have the utmost admiration for some particular course, for its unimpeachable architecture based so well on perfect theory and the attempt always to make the punishment fit the crime and award stern justice, and yet not greatly delight to play upon it because in a way that sometimes he can hardly understand it does not give him his utmost pleasure. Here again the inexplicable emotions settle it. But in that matter of "justice" which seems so much to be the ideal of new architects, there comes the reflection in the ordinary golfer's mind sometimes as to whether golf, not really being a game of justice now, would be better if it were one, whether with so much that is unfair and tantalising removed from it the game would be half so good. Surely in no fine sport is there always exact justice done, and if it be made an ideal is it not possible that the nearer such ideal is approached the poorer may become the sport, not perhaps in regular proportion but in approximate effect? Golf is a game of Nature after all, and Nature in some ways does[Pg 366] not always stick to justice. One may ponder upon what Anatole France once said about this justice. "In the vulgar sense," he wrote, "it is the most melancholy of virtues. Nobody desires it. Faith opposes it by grace and Nature by love. It is enough for a man to call himself just for him to inspire a genuine repulsion. Justice is held in horror by things animate and inanimate. In the social order it is only a machine, indispensable doubtless, and for that reason respectable, but beyond question cruel since it has no other function than to punish, and because it sets jailers and executioners at work." And perhaps it may be said that golf has little enough in principle to do with justice either; and we have seen into what perplexities the good authorities of St. Andrews have fallen by their vain endeavour to make a code of laws that would settle the just dues of every golfer in every circumstance. Nature in her variety has contrived to beat them all continually. Perhaps it may be the same with the construction of courses, but the end of all golfers' endeavour, however much it may be criticised, is the good of the game, and it is generally achieved.

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Those who in the most dispassionate frame of mind have considered carefully all the points that should count the most and detached themselves as well as they might from their private and inexplicable preference have generally come to the conclusion that there are three courses in this great golfing country of ours that are somewhat better than all the rest in their golfing quality. One of them is old St. Andrews, another of them is middle-aged Westward Ho! and the third is the youthful Prince's at Sandwich. Considered as the perfect course, weighing point against point, a jury of the best critics might have difficulty in coming to any[Pg 367] other decision than that architecturally, for the real magnificence of its golfing value, the great creation of Mr. Mallaby-Deeley on the golfing land by Pegwell Bay is supreme. Here ten years ago there was nothing but a barren waste of sandhills, just as they had been, as it seemed, since the very beginning of things—lonesome, useless, forgotten. Then it was realised that what was good for nothing else was best of all for golf. Mr. Mallaby-Deeley saw it and understood, and now hereabouts the land is comparatively priceless so much is it coveted by the golfers, who also now understand as they see. Other great courses have been the productions of a long period of time, improvements continually on an original structure of the crudest kind. Westward Ho! was not made in a season, nor in many seasons. Only recently some of its most delightful touches have been added to it. St. Andrews was the work of generations. But Prince's, though it has been appreciably changed from its original design, was like one great flash of inspiration, and as such is surely the most amazing achievement in the architecture of golf. Mr. Mallaby-Deeley in other ways has shown himself to be a man of immense imagination; but was it ever better illustrated than in his making of Prince's? Our admiration for the course may be not the less but greater because we cannot play her properly. For my own humble part I love most the championship course of the Royal Cinque Ports club at Deal near by. Here there are charm and variety, and holes of the most splendid character. If some find fault with them, what does it matter when they are so good to play? The Royal St. George's course at Sandwich, again, is a most beautiful thing; surely there is no other which gives such an infinite pleasure to a greater number of capable players. But for sheer golfing quality, Prince's truly is the queen of all.[Pg 368]

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I have asked Mr. Mallaby-Deeley to tell me what his ideals are in this matter, and in response he has made a statement of such interest and value that it should be given at its length. He said that, premising that for purposes of consideration we should regard "ideal links" as having reference only to the sequence of holes, both as to ranges of length, difficulty, and beauty of design, he submitted that the making of such an ideal course, given suitable ground, depended then on three things only, being knowledge, time, and money. St. Andrews and his own Prince's come nearest to this ideal, but the former fails in that it is too straight in and out, and also because one can pull all the way out and all the way home again without falling into any trouble, the truth being that the more one pulls the greater the possibility of safety in doing so. Some say that if you do thus pull you cannot reach the greens, but in these days that is not so. We have seen them reach those greens after the most

exaggerated pulling. Then he thinks that the set of St. Andrews in the matter of prevailing winds is far from ideal, for so often the wind is at one's back all the way out and against the player all the way coming home, or the other way about. Again, no one can deny, he says, that St. Andrews has three if not four very ordinary and commonplace holes. Prince's, as now laid out, has in general opinion not a single commonplace or uninteresting hole in the whole course, but it has had the advantage of being laid out many years after St. Andrews, and after the introduction of the rubber ball. A course comes nearer to the ideal as its holes are placed to every variety of wind. In the early days of Prince's at Sandwich the disadvantage of an in and out course[Pg 369] were soon discovered and an enormous amount of money was spent in altering it to its present form, in which, with the single exception of St. George's, it is the best in existence, the old course at Sandwich being ideal in this respect. Mr. Mallaby-Deeley, looking upon his Prince's in the supercritical way of a pleased but still insistent creator, can see only one blemish in it, and that is that the two short holes, being the third and the fifth—though the fifth is longer than the third—come too close together. Any two holes on a course may separately be extremely good, but coming together lack something of perfection because of the repetition that instantly arises. He would have the pin visible for every approach shot on his ideal links, and the only exception he would make would be in the case of a full second shot with a long carry over a high bunker to the end of it, for this to his mind is a most interesting shot. Such an one, he points out, is that presented at the sixteenth hole at Littlestone, and he would be surprised to know that any one would ever think of altering that hole in order to enable a player in the distance to see the pin. He also would not agree to placing a bunker immediately at the back of the green, which punishes the man who dares to be up and encourages "pawkiness."

The visible pin is imperative at short holes; he will admit no exceptions. But all who have been to Prince's have been most impressed with the beauty and golfing perfection of the dog-legged holes there, a couple of which are presented at the beginning of the round, immediately introducing the stranger to some of the best delights of this course. He would have dog-leg holes of both shapes in his round, those bending to the right to worry the slicer, and those angled towards the left to help the long driver who greatly dares. The first hole at Hoylake and the second and eleventh at Prince's are[Pg 370] dog-leg holes that he likes best. But, he will tell you, by far the most vital matters to consider in making any course with pretensions to being ideal are the position of the greens and the bunkering through the course and near the hole, and, though it is a consideration that is too often overlooked, it is nearly as important to bear in mind from which quarter the prevailing wind blows. He believes every shot from the tee to the hole ought to be of equal importance, but in the case of the majority of the courses this is not so. Despite the fact that on the tee the man has everything in his favour, a perfect stance and a teed-up ball, he is given more space to play into and a greater margin for inaccuracy than in the case of any other shot. This, says the architect, is wrong. Surely it should be as necessary on the ideal course to place the tee shot as any other. He has turned the subject of ribbon bunkers very thoroughly over in his mind. In a general way, he does not like them because of the varying winds. He says, "*Tutores ibis in medias vias*," is a safe and golden rule of life, and it applies equally to ribbon bunkers which while they make some holes mar many more. Most frequently on account of wind and other things this form of hazard fails as a fair guard to the green for a hole that is meant for two full shots. It is then wrongly placed, and would generally be improved by the substitution of ear bunkers to catch sliced and pulled shots thereto. The push shot is one of the most difficult in the game to play, but it is one of the prettiest and most satisfactory in accomplishment; but the ribbon bunker is often unfair to the man who plays it. Yet the absence of such ribbon bunkers does not prevent the man who likes to play his high mashie shots from still playing them. Thus the absence of this form of bunker is fair to all, while if placed very near the green its presence penalises the push-shot player. But many a tee shot would be tame if it were not for the[Pg 371] ribbon bunkers some way ahead. In epitome he says to the student of architecture—"Bunker your course so that every bad shot is punished; place your bunkers so that every shot must be played and played well; make the length of your holes such that if a shot is fozzled it costs you a stroke; guard your greens right and left, and even to the very edge and into the green itself, if necessary, but this must of course depend on the length of shot to be played; and at one-shot holes make the green a very fort of surrounding bunkers, and guard the tee shot. Do not leave it open as at the famous short hole at St. Andrews, a much overrated hole. But above all things, make your bunkers fair; don't make them impossible to get out of except by playing back."

As to the lengths of the holes on his ideal course he would have about twelve two-shot holes varying from 380 to 440 yards, and there should be three one-shot holes of about 165, 180, and 200 yards respectively. There would be two or three drive-and-iron holes of about 350 yards each, but a drive-and-iron hole should be so constructed that if the drive is missed it will be impossible for the man who missed it to sail on the green with his next. There is a good example of this in the fifteenth at Prince's, for although this hole is only a drive and an iron the penalty for missing the drive is that it takes the player two more shots to reach the green because of the nature of the ground in front of the tee. And then he would have it a condition that the last three holes should average about 400 to 420 yards each, and the seventeenth and eighteenth should be made specially testing ones. This is the ideal course, and, being such, it is not a place for fozzlers. But if it is properly and fairly constructed it will be easier and pleasanter to play on than a course which is made difficult by the simple method of making it unfair,

for example by putting bunkers in the wrong places, by[Pg 372] cutting the hole in a ridiculous position on the green, by punishing the man who is "up" (a new-fangled and absurd idea of course construction) by placing the hole immediately in front of a bunker at the back of the green, and by leaving the approach to the green from a long shot rough or broken, and so unfair. It is easy to make any course difficult, and so conducive to high scoring, by making it unfair. This induces pawky play because the punishment for bold play may be too severe. He is also of opinion (and there is a constantly growing tendency to agree with him) that there is too much premium on putting, and that it plays far too important a part in the game, especially among first-class players and in first-class matches. He thinks the hole should be six and a half inches instead of four and a quarter. Under present conditions a putt missed by half an inch bears the same punishment (although the rest of the hole through the green may have been played faultlessly) as a hopelessly bad shot by one's opponent through the green.

Prince's supports its creator's arguments very well indeed, and one enormous fascination of it lies in the fact that it is always suggesting to you, always inviting you, always tempting you to do the more daring thing, and hinting that, even though you failed, the suffering might not be too much. In that, it seems to me, lies the chief charm of this masterpiece of architecture.

## §

So when we come home from other lands, let us think of golfing holidays in our own, and moralise from old experience. It is an aggravating circumstance that while there is hardly anything in the way of change and holiday that is so splendid as a golfing holiday, there is hardly any kind that is so easily spoiled. The[Pg 373] golfer is not dependent on the weather, only to a small extent on his friends, he seldom knows limits of time or space, yet he fails oftener in his pursuit of the perfect happiness of a summer vacation than do the unsophisticated people who kill the time of August and September in other ways, and that happens because of the very fascination of the thing, and the enthusiasm and excess to which it leads him on. In our working days limits are imposed upon us; when we are loose and unrestricted all system and wise restraint fly to pieces. It is not only that we often play too much on holidays, but that during play and in the intervals between those spells of action the imagination is at work too fast and makes riot upon settled methods which have raised the game of the individual to some more or less agreeable sort of quality. Excess and experiment are the two evils that shatter so many golfing holidays, and yet the contradictions of golf are such that we find there is something good to be said both for excess and for experiment. But be all this as it may, it is not until a man has gone through twenty golfing holiday campaigns that he fully realises he has an education to serve in this matter, and after twenty more he is able to start out on the forty-first in the strong confidence that from the days and weeks before him he will extract the full available supply of rich golfing delight. These remarks do not well apply to the person of the thick phlegmatic temperament who plays now with the same set of clubs that he started with ten years or more ago, the which have not had their shafts varnished, nor their grips attended since the time of their first swinging. This man is without imagination, without feeling, and, with no blessing upon him, we may let him wander away to play wherever he will, knowing that he will always derive some great satisfaction from his pursuit and gain[Pg 374] mightily in health. He is not like most of us; he is as the man without any religion; he is very material. He eats, he plays, he rests, he sleeps. And he does very well in it all; and yet we of the majority who think always, ponder deeply, worry exceedingly and are wracked with doubts and conflicting theories, disappointed ever in fruitless experiments, do not envy him. The material person does not go down into the depths where we grieve and are in pain (how often do we go and grieve!), but neither does he ascend to the heights of pleasure that are scaled by successful experiment, by the sudden discovery of some wonderful secret that seems to have unlocked the gates of the higher golf and rendered us immune from failure for evermore. (Never mind what happens in the morning!) We may suffer the depths for those hot moments of life on the summits.

This preamble is needed for warning. Golf is the great game of emotions, and at holiday times those emotions are quickened, strung up and, flying loose in riot, play the devil with our game. I am sorry to believe that many young men who come back to their homelands from the golfing holiday grounds in October do so with inward sighs and stifled sobs. They tell us that they have had the most glorious time; they may foolishly give an account of a round said to have been done in 74, and of many of the longest holes that cost them only four strokes apiece, and we forgive them for their words which we know are false, realising the pain of their case and that their dissembling is in a small manner for the good of the game. Their emotions have led them astray; they have been weak and foolish; they have done the wrong things and they have left undone all those which were recommended to them as right. They have played three rounds a day, and they have bought new drivers and putters. And[Pg 375] some of them have actually changed their stances and had an inch cut off a favourite shaft! Truly their emotions have led them wrong. Player! if you would pass the placid holiday, kill those emotions and cast them off. You may then take a golfing holiday from which you will derive that magnificent material

comfort and refreshment that your butcher and baker do when they walk upon the promenade at Margate and, well fed, sleep at times on the sunlit sands. You will really believe on your return to labour in the town, that you have had a splendid time, but soon you will cease to talk of it for you will find that there is very little to remember. Time was passed; that was all. The man whose emotions played old Harry with him does not forget. He has something indeed to remember, for he lived very much in his month of play. So you will see that in the scheme of golfing things as jointly ordained by Nature and kind Providence, with the petty meddling of the man himself, there are different processes of holiday, and each in its way is the best. As in so many other affairs of golf there are contradictions abounding. But let us, after such philosophy, move to some definite considerations, and consider life and facts as they are presented to us.

## §

One of the doctors' papers was well laughed at a little while since for suggesting that, on account of the nerve strain that it makes, golf is not an ideal game for everybody, especially busy folks with few hours and days for recreation. To quote: "If he takes his failures to play a good game to heart, it is doubtful whether his health gains very much. He has had, it is true, the advantage of a change of scene and occupation, and has lived for a while in a healthier[Pg 376] atmosphere, and, if he had only been satisfied with his game, all these things would have conspired to send him back to his work cheered and braced up. But he may play very badly and become unduly worried thereat. A game that is calculated to increase an irritability which has arisen out of a trying week's work can hardly be said to be recreative, at all events to the mind." The medical writer concluded impressively: "The game of golf, if it does not go smoothly, presents so many points of analogy with the tiresome eventualities of life that there can be little doubt that persons of an irritable, gloomy, and worrying disposition would be better if they did not seek their recreation on the links." The common people sometimes look upon these pronouncements from the columns of the professional paper as being like the essence of the wisdom and knowledge of the whole of Harley Street. I remember, however, that when this was published the golfers ridiculed and condemned it, and agreed to take more golf and less medicine. It is not my function to advocate the playing of less golf than is played, much less the stoppage of any of it, but I dare to suggest that there was a germ of truth in what the medical paper said. There are kinds of players who should take their golf with restraint and caution, especially at holiday times. The truth is that a vast proportion of golfing holidays are completely ruined through a bad plan of campaign, or over-doing it, or both—commonly both. We would say nothing to a doubter now about the selection of his friends for his party; he should know that it is a matter demanding the extremest care. A golfing holiday *à deux* may expose all the least beautiful parts of each man's character, and those who are not such friends that they can comfortably bear each other's infirmities might do better even to go on their golfing[Pg 377] way lonely and without a partner. There is much to be said for the freedom of this latter holiday existence, and odd indeed would be the golfing place where there were not many games for the solitary stranger to play.

The night before the opening of the campaign, the eve of the journey outwards, is a trying time to many men. I think of those who take loving interest in their clubs, and have many of them, including a first-class reserve, and perhaps a second-class reserve also, to the original set that is in full commission. The man who has only seven clubs in the world, and seems to take a pride in telling you that he has had them all since the beginning of his golf, is in no difficulty. But with others the trouble is how many clubs to take, and how many to dare to leave behind. After the first selection it is seen that about five or six drivers are put in the list, very many irons, and a large assortment of putters. All the ex-favourites are to be tried over again and experiments to be made with a number of others. It is found then that too many clubs have been selected; but after the most painful and difficult weeding out there may still be some twenty left, and these are taken. It is a mistake. From the day of arrival at the holiday place the man is in doubt as to what he will play with, and he mixes up his game into a bad state of confusion through using different clubs almost every day. It is a good rule, to which every golfer subscribes after twenty campaigns, if not before, to take away the regular clubs as used every day at home, not one less and only two more, being a spare driver and an extra putter. In that way happiness and contentment lie. I would leave out the driver did I not know the case of a man who so much grieved for one he had left behind that he travelled three hundred miles back home to get it![Pg 378]

The little truth that there was in the indictment against the game by the doctors' paper is that it is possible for some men, many of them, to have too much of it, when it becomes bad for the men and bad for their game, and holidays are rendered failures. There was a time when really good golf could only be had at the seaside, or very far away from the great centres of work and business. That is no longer the case, and the situation is that the golf we are having all the time at home is hard and strenuous, demanding great ability and thought. The golfing holiday, then, might very well be made an easy one on a links where the holes are simple, and—remembering another scare that was made by a doctors' paper some time later—I believe that there is as happy golf to be had up on the hills, and in the lonely country places, as on the margin of any sunny sea.

But it is the excess of golf that is played on holidays that spoils everything in the case of the man of a somewhat nervous temperament, and one who may not be as strong and beefy as the John Bull of the pictures. Too many of these people seem to think that, as they have gone away for golf, they should have as much of it as they can get, and play to excess accordingly. Three rounds! Three rounds! One of the reasons why some men play so much—as they put it to themselves—is that they wish to improve their game, and they conceive that the holiday time is the best of all in which to achieve that end. But experience shows that very seldom indeed is a man's game improved at such a time; very frequently it is injured, and that through the excess. When so much of it is played, weariness, though half unconsciously, is induced, proper pains are not taken at every stroke, carelessness becomes constant; then, with deterioration, too many experiments are tried, and worst of all, that terrible, and for[Pg 379] the time being incurable, disease of staleness sets in, and there is then an end to all happiness and enjoyment. There is hardly any cure for staleness except complete abstention for a time. It needs some strength of mind to carry out such a resolve, but he who severely limits his golf at holiday times enjoys it the more, and he and his health and his game are the better for it. A holiday system based on wise restrictions is a splendid thing. Men of long experience have tried many of them, and the best of all is this: Play two rounds on the first day of the week, one on the second, two again on the third, one on the fourth, two on the fifth, one on the sixth, and take a whole holiday from the game on the seventh day. That is not too much nor too little. Another point for remembrance is that on the days that are warm and long the old convention of one round before lunch and another afterwards is not a good one for the best and most enjoyable employment of the day. Much better is it to play in the morning, rest pleasantly—sleep, perhaps—in the afternoon, and play again in the cool of the evening, when golf is the best of all—always provided your course is not laid out in a straight line from east to west and back, for playing full against a setting sun is a very tantalising thing.

## §

Mention has been made of staleness. In our minds there is awakened an unhappy thought with which something had better be done for good contentment's sake ere we pass along to the pleasant consideration of this holiday golf. Staleness is the canker that kills many of these expeditions that are planned with the happiest promise. It is a dread golfing disease that rages on the links almost like an epidemic during August and September. It spoils the game and happiness[Pg 380] of every player whom it attacks, and sometimes it cuts holidays short. It is nearly safe to assume that when on holiday one golfer in every half-dozen is afflicted with it, and some of the others are in danger. It consists in the absolute incapacity of the player to produce a game that is within very many strokes of his real form; in truth the game of a good man may fall to the twenty-handicap level or lower, and each new effort on his part to raise it up again only results in a worsening of the case. There is no certain cure except isolation from the game and long rest. A trouble that has the power, then, to ruin the golfing holiday, and often does, must be considered very seriously.

Here is the progress of a case for the details of which I can personally vouch. I was a sympathetic witness of it. The man was playing well at the beginning of the holiday season and went for a month to a fine east coast links where there was no town, no village, and no society but that of golfers, and nothing to do but golf, which was what he desired. For a week he played well, doing two rounds every day, and sometimes three. The weather was hot. At the beginning of the second week there were signs of a failing game. His first anxiety soon increased; he changed his ball, then began to make alterations in his stances and swings, and at the end of the second week was all fozzles, and getting worse. Soon afterwards it was obvious that the cause of the whole thing was staleness. The man tried the heroic remedy of loafing about his quarters, golfless, for a couple of days, reading novels and pretending to play bowls against himself. He also studied the stones in the old graveyard near by. On the third day he went back to the links very hopeful, but the case was as bad as before, and, desperate, he gave his game a three days' rest after that. This also[Pg 381] failed. Neither of the resting spells was long enough. This being a man of keen nervous temperament, who took his game very seriously and was very miserable, he did the wisest thing by giving up his holiday and going home to work in London.

The primary cause of staleness is excess of play, resulting in exhaustion of nervous and physical energy, which in turn produces carelessness, decreases the capacity for taking the infinite pains that are necessary to the game, and—important—brings about a failure in the subconscious working arrangement between the mind and the physical system that has everything to do with the proper accomplishment of the various strokes. The movements of every golfing swing, as we have agreed, are extremely complicated; they consist of hundreds of little movements amalgamated into one great system, and while one is conscious of the system, it is impossible for the parts of it to be anything but subconsciously done, and they are made perfect by training and practice, and by getting the brain and the physical construction to work together exactly and with harmony. When staleness comes on, this working arrangement breaks down and the player attempts the hopeless task of trying to do consciously what can only be done the other way. I believe that this is the true explanation of staleness.



*Note 1.*—The exhaustion of the nervous and physical energy is often unsuspected, and is covered up by the enthusiasm for the game. *Note 2.*—Excess of play does not mean only a frequent playing of three rounds a day. Two rounds every day, as a regular thing, may be excess in many cases. Much depends on the individual. A man of highly-strung temperament will become stale much more quickly than a beefy, phlegmatic person, who is commonly immune. *Note 3.*—Staleness is very much more easily induced, and develops[Pg 382] more quickly and dangerously, in hot weather than at other times, because the tax on the nervous energy and the eyesight is so much greater then.

Now here are the common symptoms and the results of staleness. Almost the first real sign of it is swaying of the body. This is very slight at first, and is rarely suspected; but it brings about a general collapse of the swing and the entire golfing apparatus. A very hopeless sort of tap is given to the ball on the tee, and it is driven perhaps only a hundred and fifty yards. As everything seems to have been done properly, the player is mystified, begins to experiment, and then worse troubles come on. Shakiness of the legs, and much exaggerated knee and foot work, often resulting in collapse of the right leg and the player getting up on his toes, make up the next symptom; and another one that is a common accompaniment of the beginning of staleness is falling or lurching forward as the club is brought down on to the ball. Anything like a proper swing is, in such circumstances, impossible. Bad timing begins immediately; then there is overswinging and too fast swinging; and, of course, the moving of the head and the taking of the eye from the ball, those two faults that never miss an opportunity of coming in to add to the woes of the worried golfer.

What must the stale golfer do for his salvation and happiness? In the first place, if he has had this thing before, he should be on his guard against it and catch it in time. If taken at the very beginning an early cure is quite practicable. The golf should be stopped at once for a few days, and a rest and change, as complete as possible, taken. Then the game should be resumed warily—one round a day. In addition to this, some men will insist on having alterations made in their clubs. They deceive themselves. One of the greatest champions of all times once, in intimate conversation,[Pg 383] laid down a rule to me with great seriousness, and it is one never to be forgotten. He said: "Never make a change in your regular clubs, and never buy a new one, unless it is a putter, when you are playing badly. Only make changes when you are playing at your very best. You may then play even better, knowing so well what you want." Yet, warn them as much as you may, many men will make extensive changes when they are stale and desperate. One plea to them then—the change having failed, go back to the old clubs before changing again. Never get far from your base, or you will be lost in doubt and confusion. Let it be the same with methods as with clubs. If a new way fails, let the sick man go back to the old one before experimenting again. He should remember that that old one has served him well, and the possibilities are that he will have to stand by it after all. Then the stale golfer should try to encourage himself; he should try a new set of opponents, play with men of longer handicap than himself, who normally would never outdrive him, and so on. A change of links often works wonders, but if the staleness has gone very far, and it matters little, it is often wise to give up the golfing part of the holiday if one is in progress. We have seen the advice given to play through a period of staleness. This is a heroic measure, but it would not succeed in one in six cases, and the suffering would be too great for the ordinary mortal. We tell him to take few clubs away with him, and to be faithful to them, and they will serve him well. And we tell him when his golf is ill not to fly to the dangerous stimulant of a new club. And yet, where is the man who does come back from his holiday without a new one in his bag, one fond relic of those days that were so tightly packed with golf? We bring them back with us, the names of their nativity upon them, as hunters[Pg 384] and explorers bring trophies from distant lands. Mutely they testify for us. Sometimes when the holiday is done they are added, for their merit and fine service, to the clubs in commission in the bag; oftener they fall into the reserve; frequently they are given a purely honorary office and sent off with a title to the golfer's own private House of Lords as magnificent relics.

## §

A diary should be kept during the golfing holiday; indeed it should be kept at all times. More such are made than the golfing world realises, because they are often, to the uttermost degree, secret and private, and that not merely for the reason that some diarists place themselves in the confessional when they make their entries, but because, alas! they are conscious of serving their own vanity by exaggeration of their best achievements. It may be kept for one of two distinct reasons, or for both of them, though the latter is not generally done. The two different objects are entertainment and instruction. For the former, the small things that are sold in shops will do. You write down, each time you have been playing, where the game was had, who the other man was, and what you beat him by; or the extent of the disaster if it was the other way about. In the column devoted to "Conditions" you exaggerate the force of the wind; and under "Remarks" you say you were driving and putting splendidly when you won. If you lost, the space is left blank. This record is in its own way valuable, because at a future time it will refresh the memory concerning great golfing days of the past, and thus furnish a real enjoyment.

When a game of golf is played, and finished, it is not done with. It is lodged in a great store of remembrance, with full particulars attached to[Pg 385] it, ripening with time, so that the player's memories are among the best happenings of his golfing possessions. All of us know that this is so, and it is as a kind of catalogue that the little diaries serve their purpose well.

The diary of analysis or instruction is a very different thing. The object is to make a serial record of ideas and successful experiments, faults and tendencies—most particularly tendencies—in order that on periodical examination of it the player may derive useful lessons and improve his game. One should get a good exercise book, bound nicely and strongly, with morocco corners, and just enter up one's performances on the plain paper according to any system that one may choose, giving prominence to a line at the top of each entry, naming the day, the place, and the man. I have seen diaries kept in this way, and they have been very serviceable. But the man who is starting anything of this kind must come to a definite agreement with himself to be absolutely honest and sincere; and he must also be very introspective, and have keen discernment for his own faults and constant observation for all that he does at every stroke. Otherwise it were better that he merely kept the diary of glorious remembrances.

Let him, if he keeps a diary of fact, hold it secret from all the world; but every night after his play put down in it the plain, real truth about what happened; and let him see to it, after much thought upon recent events, that he does properly know the truth. This point is emphasised because men may be short with their putts, say on sixteen of eighteen greens in one round, and yet not notice the frequency of the same fault; or they may be pulling or cutting their putts all the time and be oblivious, in the same way, to the circumstance. Or they may be pitching their approaches too short of the greens, or slicing most of their drives. The point is that the golfer's[Pg 386] memory for his own misdeeds is an exceedingly short one, and he rarely gets them tabulated and analysed as he should. If he made an analysis of his play at the end of the day, stated the truth about it in the book, and then examined that book carefully once a week, he would learn something about the causes that were preventing him from getting on in the game, and the next step would suggest itself. Some would say that the making of personal statistics in this way would be a very troublesome matter, and they would be certain to tire of it soon. It is not so much a nuisance as might be imagined; it becomes interesting, and it helps one's game.

But if you are doubtful about this idea, do keep a diary of sorts anyhow, for it is such a pity to let the golf that has been played die out of memory. You may gather a notion of the value and interest of what might be called played golf by reading through the match-book of another man, like that of the late F. G. Tait, which is included in the delightful and pathetic memoir that Mr. John Low wrote about him. Tait, model of golfers, always filed the facts about his matches, but briefly. Not many words were wasted in the "Remarks" column; what was said there was the plain truth. Often it was "F. G. T. in great form," but the recorder knew how to denounce himself. It does one good to read through this diary of one who was soldier, hero, golfer, and darling of the game.

## §

But not every man departs on a golfing holiday for a strenuous time of continuous match-play with keen rivals who might be fine companions, and who would keep him up at night with bridge, after a day's work on the links was done. All sorts and conditions of men are included in this comprehensive golfing world of ours;[Pg 387] and some have most contemplative moods, love solitude, and, alone with themselves and the game, probe deeply into its mysteries and into their own weaknesses. It is to the credit of the pastime that it accommodates itself most splendidly to every disposition and mood and manner; and men of a lonely way have gone solus on their holidays, and held themselves solus all the time, and have come back again, well refreshed and satisfied. They have often enough had fewer disappointments than the others. They have practised extensively, and they have improved themselves as golfers. Practice is indeed a feature of many golfing holidays. Here at such times we have the full game at our disposal and nothing but the game, and now, if ever, we can make ourselves to be better golfers. That is how we reason. It is a matter to be considered carefully.

Practice fails in most cases because the golfers concerned do not concentrate upon their efforts with that keenness, thoroughness, and determination they exhibit when playing a real match. The game is not the same to them; they do not try so hard, however much, as one might say, they try to try, and the result is there is such an excess of looseness, carelessness, about their methods, that bad habits are born; and these persons then had really better not be practising at all, for thus they do harm to their game. This is one reason why one-club practice is better in small quantities than in large ones. It is not sufficiently interesting when kept up. What we should do, therefore, is to make the practice interesting, and fortunately the circumstances of the game afford wide scope for doing so. There is no other game that is half so good in this way. Golf to many people's minds is not merely a game to be played with others and against them; it is a study, a subject for meditative research and

exultant discovery. If others should regard such terms as immoderate,[Pg 388] golfers anyhow know they are fairly employed. The essential difference that the presence of a man as opponent makes is that a real game, hard and according to the law, has then to be played, and there can be a winning or a losing of it.

Well then, it is our business, in order to make solitary practice interesting and valuable, to create a game for ourselves. It is easily done, and there are some wise men who say that they would rather play their solitary game, going round the links alone with all their clubs or nearly, than they would play a match with a stranger who happened not to turn out to be the right kind of golfing man. Many who start systems of solitary competitive play against themselves in this way fail with them, did they but know it, because they are not honest with themselves. Having become very badly bunkered, and having taken three for recovery, they must not call it one because they should have got out in one, had they played the shot just right; nor, having missed a foot putt, must they consider it as holed because if they had tried their uttermost they could have holed it. We must see that it is of the essence of solus play, and making it valuable, that the man should try his best and should know and feel that he has no second attempt at the same stroke, just as he has none in the real game when others are there. If he permits himself second drives and putts, all the strokes are done without the sense of responsibility, and the player then were better indoors writing letters to his friends to come and match themselves against him. Therefore let the first and the most inexorable rule in one's solitary golf be that the shot once made must count, no matter what its quality. What may be permitted—and this does not operate as an exception to the rule—is that when a shot has been badly done another ball may be played from the same[Pg 389] place. One may learn something in this way, but always must it be understood that the first ball must count; and it is a good maxim that there should be no attempted repetition of a successful stroke, for if it were done well again the man would be no better off in mind or skill, and if it failed there would be an unnecessary disappointment and uncertainty.

Now, to consider ways of competing against oneself that will make interesting the lonely game, and lift it to value too, every man of thought might quite well devise some suitable system for himself; but we may tell him of some that have been successful with many players, and of a good principle to embrace in any new one, which is never to make the test or competition too severe. I believe that golfers are improved more by coaxing and flattery than by harsh measures and heavy defeats. It is often said that the best way to improve is to play against better players than ourselves, but there are limitations to that advice which are not always sufficiently emphasised. The superior party ought not to be too much superior, the different points of the game of the two men should not be very widely contrasted, and the better player should be giving to the inferior one so much allowance that the latter ought to win as often as he loses, never letting it be forgotten that, when handicaps are right and three-fourths of the difference is allowed, the odds are really always in favour of the better player, as has been proved over and over again. Even when a man is of long experience and has been fashioned by nature in the heroic mould, it is impossible to play his very best golf, and be improving on it, unless he "has his pecker up." The pecker properly set makes happiness and confidence, and it is only when such moods are engendered that the man is led on to higher things, perceives the absence of limitation to his prospects[Pg 390] of improvement, and likens himself to the chrysalis of a Vardon or a Braid. Above everything else, as we have agreed so often before, golf is a game of hope. Crush the hope by setting the man a task that is beyond him and you take away the joy of the game and kill the happy prospects. The golfer who is winning will win again and play better.

In these observations there have been some principles for practice laid down that are seldom emphasised, but are of the most vital importance. To make exact systems to suit them is, after all, a simple affair. Now many men play round after round, counting their strokes, as if they were playing in a medal competition, and comparing results at the finish, always trying to break their own records. They may gain some benefit from this play, but it often fails in interest, and consequently in value, for the same reason that medal competitions do—because of the continual occurrence of the one, or it may be two, very bad holes. The percentage of cards that are turned from good to bad merely by one disastrous hole must be very high, and when a man is playing a practice round and does a nine at the second hole, it is difficult for him to treat the remainder very seriously or be keen about them. The remedy is simple. Let this system of playing and comparisons be that his aggregate shall always be for sixteen or seventeen holes only, leaving the worst to be eliminated. There is nothing unfair in doing so. The one bad hole is frequently more the result of accident than of inability. At the beginning of a system of practice play three holes may be dropped regularly from the reckoning, then a week later two, the week after that one only. Comparisons of form are more accurate and reliable when the worst hole is eliminated, than when all eighteen are totted up. Then the man may play the bogey game; but instead of opposing the set bogey of[Pg 391] the course and complicating the business with handicap strokes, let him make a bogey of his own of such a kind that it represents not the scratch man's proper game but his, so that when he is playing well he ought to beat it, and it should be a tolerable match. In constructing such a bogey, he might make allowance for his own special likes and dislikes in regard to particular holes. Again, I have known men to derive pleasure and improvement from a system of practice against the ordinary bogey by which they merely reckoned the number of holes at

which they equalled or beat the phantom's figures, disregarding the losses. There is a little difference between this and the ordinary reckoning, and it is in the direction of encouragement if the player is coming on.

And then there is the interesting system that was first set forth by a most eminent player who has been amateur champion more than once, by which the practiser wins half-crowns for his good play and loses them on his off days. He plays against bogey on terms that give him an equal chance. Then he establishes a money-box with two sections in it, one being for bogey and the other for himself, and into each section he deposits four half-crowns, which is very little to pay for all the enjoyment he is about to gain. When bogey beats him one of the half-crowns is lifted out of the man's section into the ghost's, but when flesh and blood prevail the coin comes back. The course of practice is ended when one side or the other has got all the half-crowns. If bogey has them there is something wrong with the game of the man, and he had better start another series; but when the man is triumphant he may depart for a holiday exultingly and spend the money on it, in the doing of which he will probably win some more, his form being so much bettered by his lonely practice.

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[Pg 392]

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE OLD DIGNITY OF LONDON GOLF, AND ITS NEW IMPORTANCE, WITH A WORD FOR THE CHARM OF INLAND COURSES.

Perhaps in the middle ages of the game some rare old conservative of a player at one of the great Scottish seats of golf was told by another that a gentleman had just arrived by the coach from London and would like a match in the morning, and it is distinctly possible, if he was the excellent man we picture him, that he ejaculated, "And where, sir, is London?" The manner would have been Johnsonian, if not the sentiment. Should any one now be disposed to regard such lack of knowledge—though I think you would find it was only what might be called judicial golfing ignorance—or narrowness, or whatever it was, as merely stupid or a little culpable, he may hesitate. The pride of dignity, arising from conscious strength and superiority, was a fine thing among the Scottish golfers, and certainly was to be admired. That spirit, that sturdy consciousness of personal value, have helped to the making of a British empire. And sometimes a golfer would wander in the north and be discovered by the players there to have a wooden club with a brass sole, and thereupon he might be good-humouredly mocked for being the Blackheath golfer that he was, since it was on the famous course by London that the brassey[Pg 393] was first used. Since then London has given other good things to golf, including many courses that are unequalled among their kind and a number of players of high championship rank. And sometimes there is more golf played in a day within twenty-five miles of Charing Cross than there is in the whole of Scotland in a week, and much of it is very good golf. But this is not a place for comparisons, and particularly it is not meant for one in which the English gratitude to Scottish benefactors for the gift of this remarkable game is to be lessened from the full. It is only suggested that London golf is now a thing of great account. That is coming to be understood; but one doubts if the Londoners properly realise that the game in the metropolis has rich history and traditions which make a match for those of nearly any other place. Except that the great players of the game of different ages were so little acquainted with it, Blackheath has golfing land as historic as any, and the Royal Blackheath Club, with its origin in 1608, is the oldest in the world. That is London. Some time since there was a fashion for open-air shows of pageantry, and if the golfers had then been so disposed they could have put forward a pageant of London golf that would have embraced most picturesque and impressive tableaux. There is King James the First of England and the Sixth of Scotland, keen golfer indeed, playing the game at Blackheath in the company of some of his nobles when the court was at Greenwich, and there is a charming scene to be imagined in which the monarch gives his royal sanction and authority to the Society of Golfers that is established at this place in 1608, as it is well believed to have been, and in varying forms to have maintained its existence ever since, being to-day the Royal Blackheath Golf Club, and highly respected. I think we should regard this King James as being the very first[Pg 394] of our London golfers, and he makes a fine figure of a player for the distinction, keen enough in all conscience. Five years before the reputed beginning of the Society at Blackheath he appointed William Mayne to be the royal clubmaker, and a few years later gave one named Melvill a monopoly of ball-making at four shillings a time. Altogether this makes a good scene of golf.

Here in the earliest days the course of Blackheath consisted of but five holes, which was then considered the proper number, and was the same as the Honourable Company had at Leith. Later there were seven holes arranged, and though they are played in a different order, those seven remain much the same to-day. It is to the discredit of London golfers as a body, those golfers who make the most reverential pilgrimages to northern shrines, that they have not, to the extent of one in a hundred, ever been to the scene of the old Blackheath golf, or played a game there on this hallowed ground, as they may at their will. It is the story again of the prophet in his own country, the same failing as that by which the majority of Londoners might be condemned for never having visited the Tower of London. I believe I have met more golfers in America who have been to Blackheath than I have met in England, for I have encountered several who told me they had not cared to sail back home until they had made the short journey down from Charing Cross to the famous common.

Apart from the sense of history and the sentiment of pilgrimage, Blackheath, as a practical golfing proposition still surviving, should interest every golfer intensely. Surely it is one of the most interesting courses, one causing the deepest reflections, and one which, even by play upon it, might have some good effect on a man's game. For it is a chastening course, is our old Blackheath; one that makes humility if [Pg 395] course ever did, and one that gives us the best contentment with our modern lot. Men who have played at Blackheath do not so constantly complain of the weak effort of their greenkeeper, and his governing committee, at their most favoured club. A little while since the cry was raised that golf had become too easy—too easy! It was said that the improving of the fairways and the smoothing of the putting greens had taken all its early viciousness from the game. Conditions have certainly changed, but when champions tell me that this maddening game from time to time brings their nerves to the state of piano wires, it may be reckoned as sufficiently difficult for the ordinary mortal. But Blackheath is extraordinary and most educative. It is certainly hard enough, though the modern bunker scientists have done nothing with it, and in the ordinary sense it has no bunkers. New theories of bunkering and the changing necessities of new kinds of balls trouble the Blackheath golfers not at all, for the course belongs to London and not to themselves, and they cannot do any engineering work upon it, as is being accomplished continually on other courses. Of the seven holes that are played the shortest is 170 yards, there is another of 230, a third of 335, another of 380, another of 410, a sixth of 500, and the longest is 540. The two very long holes come together, and though they are virtually bunkerless you may be assured that they take an uncommon amount of playing, and that he who gets them in five strokes each is skilful and fortunate too. Here, as nowhere else, is one made to feel that inferior shots bring their own punishment with them without any artificial hazards.

The common is quite flat, but it is intersected by various roads and paths, and the greens are generally near to these walking ways. Variety is given by the great gravel pits which are here, as they have been for [Pg 396] ages, although they are now smoothed and grassed over, and the biggest of them has to be played through at both the long holes. What is known as "Whitfield's Mount," a little clump of enclosed trees, is almost the only relief from the bareness and flatness of this golfing common. The lies are better than they used to be, but however kindly they may think of them at Blackheath—and we must respect them for doing so—they are not good. How could they be? The common is open for the children of London, or any other place, to play upon, and for the grown-ups to lounge about or walk over, which in abundance they do. It is primarily a public common and only secondarily a golf course, and the vast majority of those who walk upon it know nothing of the great game, except what they occasionally see as they pass along. The golfers have no rights. They have the greens, as they are called for compliment, smoothed a little and made in some way to resemble greens; and there are holes of sorts but not generally with flags in them, and there are no teeing boxes. The fairway is as hard as might be expected, and consists for the most part of bare places and tufts. There is no smoothness and evenness of proper golfing turf about it. But one does not say this in an unappreciative way. Not for a million balls or a permanent increase of drive would we have Blackheath anything but what it is, for if it were changed the charm would be gone.

Let us go there and try the game. We must decide in advance that, like Vardon, Braid, and Taylor we can play our real game before any gallery in the world, and let our nerves and self-confidence be braced accordingly, for those who play at Blackheath must undergo great ordeals. A number of children, usually accompanied by a small dog, discover us soon after our appearance on the course, and gather close while our stroke is being made, very close. There is a little [Pg 397] boy, perhaps, one or two little girls, the baby, and the dog. We consider most the baby at Blackheath. The boy, occasionally relieved by the elder girl, is the spokesman of the party, and in tones indicative of complete sympathy with the objects of the expedition, which are to strike the ball and project it in the direction of the holes, he explains to the remainder what is about to be done, what is done, and how we fail to do what was intended. He corrects himself whenever he finds his information to have been wrong. Willie having told little Liza something about the performance that is pending, the child inquires about what will happen if the gentleman does not hit the ball, and the gentleman, hearing, develops fear. At this moment the dog, which has been lingering quietly within a yard of the ball, shows signs of becoming restive, and is inclined to smell at it. Finally it favours only a disconsolate bark. Somehow we despatch that ball at last, and then Willie,

Nell, Liza, baby, Towser, and selves move on some way towards the hole, but not so far as we should have done, because the ball happened to strike a lamp-post; and on the way Liza desires to know if a golf ball would kill anybody if it hit them, and wishes Willie to buy one some day. And a human sweetness there is in these little Blackheath urchins after all! This early innocence is a sublime and splendid thing, and when in like circumstances you would scowl, you gentlemen from London, remember, if you please, that Liza called you one, and she thinks you are.

And the caddies! At Blackheath they have the most wonderful of all caddies. The ways and manners and the character of the St. Andrews and Musselburgh caddies are inferior. These Blackheath fellows are not like the usual thing. They lean against the wall of the club-house and offer their services to the stranger, declaring that it is a nice day for the game,[Pg 398] when a storm is gathering over the common. Generally the caddie is given to laziness; they are a shiftless company. But see, though the Blackheath caddie looks as indolent as any to begin with, he is in truth one of the most active fellows within a hundred miles of Charing Cross, as you very soon discover, after beginning the round with him. The old red flag of traction-engine law obtains at Blackheath still. The golfer is a dangerous person, death lurks in his flying ball, and so a man with a scarlet banner must walk before the player to warn all people that he is coming on. But we make the caddie do the ordinary work of carrying, and teeing up, and red-flagging also, and he contrives in effect to be in two places at the same time. He tees the ball, lays down the driver by the side of it, and then runs ahead with a coloured handkerchief, which is the red flag, and he waves it while on the run and the golfer follows. So the caddie, leaving near the ball the club that is needed, goes on again, and is always a shot ahead. Reaching the green he stands by the hole until the golfer comes near enough to see it, and then the man hurries away to the next tee, sets everything in a state of preparation (and he carries a supply of sand in his pocket), and at once is off again to the distance of a drive before the player has holed out. The weakness of this system is that the caddie, by force of circumstances, can know little or nothing of the progress of the match, he is not one of the party, and he cares nothing at all about our good shots. He lacks the sympathy of the real caddie, but he is marvellously efficient all the same. If it is true, as we always say, that golf is the same all over the world, I would suggest that if there is a place where it is not the same it is at Blackheath, and that is why every one should go there, and it should cease to be the fact that more London golfers have been to Fifeshire than have been to play upon that historic course.[Pg 399]

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Take a glimpse into the rich past of Blackheath golf. Look into the old bet-book of the club and see some entries there, and do not forget that all bets were made on the understanding that all members of the club had a share in the gains of the winner no matter whether the bets were made in cash or kind. On Saturday, July 9 1791, "Mr. Pitcaithly bets Captain Fairfull one gallon of claret that he drives the Short Hole in three strokes, six times in ten—to be played for the first time he comes to Blackheath—after the annual day. Lost and paid by Mr. Pitcaithly, the 10th September." A little while later "Mr. Christie bets Mr. Barnes one gallon of claret that he drives from the Thorn Tree beyond the College Hole in three strokes, five times in ten, to be decided next Saturday." Mr. Christie in due course performed his driving feat and won his bet. Then "Captain Welladvice, having left the company without permission of the chair, has forfeited one gallon claret"; and "Mr. Turner bets Mr. Walker one gallon claret that he plays him on Wednesday, the 12th inst., four rounds of the green, and that Mr. Walker does not gain a hole of him." Again, "Mr. Longlands bets Mr. Win. Innes, Sen., that he will play him for a gallon of claret, giving Mr. Innes one stroke in each hole. Four rounds on the green. Out and in holes to be played." One may well understand that all the good claret that was thus available from these gallant bets, together with what was bought and paid for in the ordinary course, had a heartening effect upon those old golfers, with the result that in the fine fancies that floated in the dining-hall of the "Green Man" after dinner, drives seemed all endowed with unusual length, and direction was always good. Again it is recorded[Pg 400] that on an evening of June "Captain MacMillan bets a gallon with Mr. Jameson that Captain Macara in five strokes drives farther by fifteen yards than any other gentleman Mr. Jameson may name of the Golf Society now present, to be determined next Saturday"; and no sooner had Captain MacMillan registered his bet than there came along Mr. Callender, who "bets Mr. Hamilton one gallon that Mr. R. Mackenzie drives in five strokes farther than Mr. H., to commence at the Assembly Hole and go on five strokes running." Then Mr. Innes gets into a sporting mood, and he "bets Mr. Wilson a gallon (a guinea) that he beats him, allowing Mr. Innes the tee stroke with his wooden club, and after with his irons. Out and in—four rounds." All these were in the latter days of the eighteenth century, and all the time the happy golfers were filling up the bet-book of the club, not with golfing bets any more than, or as much as, with bets about events of the great war that was in progress; as, for instance, when Mr. Satterthwaite "bets Mr. Callender a gallon of claret that Admiral Nelson's squadron does take or destroy the French transports in the harbour of Alexandria, or the major part of them."

In the Knuckle Club and the Blackheath Winter Golf Club, forerunners of the Blackheath Golf Club, the same happy state of affairs prevailed. The Knuckle Club was a very remarkable institution. In form it was a secret society. Each member had to be initiated, and had to learn certain signs and answers to questions by which he would know brother members from strangers. Also, the members wore orders or a kind of regalia, and there were heavy fines if they allowed themselves to be seen outside the club-rooms with these special tokens of their community about them. On one occasion we have a member, named James Walker, heavily fined in claret for being so thoughtless as to[Pg 401] take home his order. The holder of the golfing gold medal for the year was termed the Grand Knuckle, and was the chief of the club, which boasted also a "Registrar," and various other officials of much dignity of title. As the mystic element of the club decreased, so the golfing strength and enthusiasm of it increased, and it was by this process of evolution that in course of time the mystery lapsed and the name was changed. Before the competitions of the club took place advertisements were always inserted in the *Times* and the *Morning Chronicle* of the period, and it must be remarked that play in these competitions was usually conducted on the strictest lines. One record in the minutes reads: "28th March, 1795. Medal Day. It being stated to the club that Mr. Innes, one of the candidates for the medal played for this day, lost his ball; the opinion of the club was desired whether the loss of the ball put an end to the candidate's chance for the honours of the day." The club determined that it did. So more than a hundred years ago their medal rules were stricter than ours, in this matter at any rate. "Scrutineers" always examined the medal cards after dinner, and announced the winner. In the early part of last century there seems to have been rather less of betting and a little more of feasting. There were gifts of venison and turtle from the members, and the supply of claret, varied now and then by champagne and choice spirits, was very copious. Each time a child was born to a member, he contributed a pound's worth of claret to the weekly or monthly dinner; and whenever a member was married, the same thing was done. The golf of Blackheath, and all connected with it, was then a highly picturesque thing. The course was yet only a five-holes affair. The clubs of the players were carried by pensioners of the Royal Naval Hospital, Greenwich, in their quaint uniforms, and an[Pg 402] allowance of beer was regularly made to them by the club until 1832. The pensioners were caddies until 1869.

The Royal Blackheath Club was, and still is, most original and interesting in many points of its constitution and government. To be captain of this club, small one comparatively as it is now, is to fill a high office, the honourable nature of which is duly impressed upon the holder at the time of his election and installation, for he is elevated with much ceremony and in much the same way as the captain of the Royal and Ancient Club. The retiring captain sits in his chair at the meeting for the last time, and thanks are offered to him by grateful members for the good things he has done in his year. And then the captain-elect is called by name by the secretary, who takes in his arms the silver club which is the equivalent of the mace in Parliament, the symbol of power and active authority, and places himself at the head of a procession which is formed. The field-marshal, conducting the newcomer to the chair, follows behind, and so they make their way to the head of the chamber, where the field-marshal presents the new captain to the old one. There are various little forms of ritual to be gone through; the new captain makes a solemn declaration of loyalty and fidelity to the club and his office, and, particularly, expresses his anxiety to maintain its dignity, and then he commits himself irrevocably and awfully to an undying oath—he kisses the club! All this is to-day just as it was in the ancient days. Mention has been made of the field-marshal of the club; no other club boasts a field-marshal, who fills an office of most ineffable and incomparable dignity. Captains may come and go, year by year; they do their work well; and they lay down the club. But the field-marshal is above all captains, and he is in office till he[Pg 403] dies. He is a prince over captains. He is essentially a golfer—not a mere ornament—and a good golfer, and one strong in the true spirit of the game. Because a good field-marshal is not easily found, he is made much of. The installation of a new one is a fine ceremony. There is a solemn gathering, all the famous trophies and bits of regalia are furbished up; there are speeches, forms, declarations, questions, answers; and if it were a very coronation the thing could scarcely be more serious. The silver club is held before the field-marshal elect, and he is presented with the special medal of his office, when he is finally addressed thus: "We expect and ask that you will wear this medal at all golf meetings as your predecessors did; and we have further to ask that you will in all time coming, while you are spared in health, do all that in you lies to maintain and support the rights and privileges of this ancient club; to maintain the honour and dignity of the club; and should any attempts be made to interfere with the rights of the club, that you will aid the executive in endeavouring to put down such interference, so that the club may maintain the high and honourable position that it ever has done, since its institution in 1608. Kiss the club!" The field-marshal kisses it, and thus he is exalted among the highest in the whole world of golf.

There are many eras with marked features to be noted in the history of the club. Even now many of those features are still perpetuated. Dinners are still held; dignity still is high. We have now heard much of the old-time Blackheath golfers; but an era of vast consequence, not only to Blackheath but to the game, is one that can still be remembered by some old golfers, that of great activity which began just before the middle of last century, and is only just now reaching its climax in the great and universal "boom" in golf.[Pg 404] It has already been suggested that Blackheath led the way, and led it most effectively. For long after it had done so it was still the

premier club in England, and in playing strength was the best. The club itself has few solid possessions—just a few fine old club heirlooms—but many great memories. In a very modern sense it is poor, having a comfortable but not a magnificent club-house, and no splendid links of eighteen holes. But the Royal Blackheath Golf Club is like a fine old English gentleman of the very best kind, ignoring all new ways of thought and life, eschewing all sordidness, clinging to the fine simple principles of wise fore-fathers. That is just what it is, the fine old English gentleman whom the age has outstripped. It is the Colonel Newcome of the clubs.

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And in that pageant of London golf that we suggested there are many other picturesque and significant scenes. If we cannot be sure of the places where the holes were cut, nor of the situation of the teeing grounds, it is still certain, from documentary evidence, that a golf course that was made at Molesey Hurst was only second, in point of seniority, in England, to Blackheath itself, and it was very high up in the list of the golf clubs of the world. Manchester came next in 1818. There are concerned in the only existing record two people of no less credit and renown than David Garrick, the actor, and the eminent Dr. Alexander Carlyle, of Inveresk, who witnessed the Porteous riots, saw the fight at Prestonpans, and amid these many excitements cultivated his game to a fine point, was one of the keenest golfers of the eighteenth century, and won the Musselburgh medal in 1775. Carlyle was like many others of the Scottish parsons of those good times and the present,[Pg 405] who would take their golf clubs with them wherever they might wander, on the chance of opportunity presenting itself. He came to London, and knowing of Blackheath, the clubs came with him. Garrick at that time had a house at Hampton which in recent days was occupied by the late Sir Clifton Robinson, the organiser of the London electric tramway system. Garrick asked John Home and a number of friends, including Carlyle, to dine with him at Hampton and bring their golf clubs and balls with them that they might play on the course at Molesey Hurst. When the six of them, who were in a landau, passed through Kensington, the Coldstreams, who were changing guard, observed their clubs, and gave them three cheers "in honour of a diversion peculiar to Scotland."

There might be a railway train in the pageant of London golf, one of the early trains with engines of the Stephensonian style. The period would be just after the accession of Queen Victoria, and there would be two gentlemen travelling together from London to Aldershot, one of them being Sir Hope Grant, a keen golfer, a member of the Royal and Ancient Club, who held a military appointment at Aldershot, while the other would be the Duke of Cambridge. It has been recorded that in matter of companionship this journey was a very dull affair, for Sir Hope Grant was moody, and failed to respond to the well-meant attempts of the Duke to open conversation. He seemed troubled. But suddenly after long silence he jumped up from his seat, rushed to the window of the compartment and opened it. At this stage the Duke of Cambridge felt that things could not be well with his companion, and jumping up after him, grabbed him by the tails of his coat. A moment later they both sat down, and looked at each other. "Well," said Sir Hope Grant, in the manner of a man recovering from a great surprise,[Pg 406] "that is a thing that you seldom see near London; there were two men playing golf in a field out there."

And then in the pageant there would be represented the starting of golf at Wimbledon in 1865, with the Blackheath emissaries all on fire with the zeal of their enterprise. Wimbledon with its Royal Wimbledon and its London Scottish, its famous holes and its windmill, and all the rest of it, has played no small part in golfing history. At the beginning seven holes were made as they had them at Blackheath, and did you ever hear that at Wimbledon once there was a round that consisted of nineteen holes, the longest round in number of holes in the world? Tom Dunn, who was responsible for the extension of the course about 1870, told the story, and so far as I am aware he only told it in America. We may repeat it here in the words he used. The committee had asked him whether he thought they might make a full-sized course on their land, and, coming to the conclusion that they might, he was told to go on with the work, and eventually was satisfied that he had made a good job of it. The secretary of the period is said to have been somewhat imperfectly acquainted with the game in general just then, and went to Dunn with the inquiry as to how many holes they had on the old course at St. Andrews, and was told. "The secretary thought a moment," said Tom, "scratched his head and began to look wise. Then he approached very closely, and nodding his head for me to bend my ear, he whispered in a hoarse voice, 'Tom, let us have one more!' 'Oh, that is impossible,' I replied. 'It cannot be, for eighteen is the orthodox number.' 'I care not for that,' replied the secretary, who was accustomed to have his own way, 'we will have one more!' I was very young at the time and I would do anything rather than offend the gentleman, for he had much influence, and I wanted his goodwill;[Pg 407] so I reluctantly submitted to the demand. The committee met the next day, and I was asked if I had succeeded in making an eighteen-holes course. I replied, with some hesitation, that I had made a nineteen-holes course, and explained why I had done so. Well, you never in your life saw a more excited



lot of men. There was an uproar in a moment, and all made a dive for the poor secretary, who never heard the last of it."

## §

Within sight of Wimbledon now there is Coombe Hill, one of the best and most recent achievements in the new metropolitan golf. Here is a contrast indeed! One may sometimes wonder how those ill-tempered people who grumble that golfers in these days take their game, and all about it, too richly, and that fine club-houses do not make plus players—such complainers still being eager for all the most modern comforts themselves—would like to live their golfing lives for a season after the early Wimbledon manner in all its great simplicity. The first club-house those golfers ever had, if you would call it by the name, was the old iron "shooting house," and it measured only eight yards by six. It served the purposes of club-room, clothes-room and others. If its floor space was small, its roof was high, and the members' clothes were hung up on hooks, to the very top; and were lifted up to their proper places, and reached down again by a pole. Most of the numerous members had their private hooks, and a boy who worked the pole had a most marvellous memory for the garments and their proper owners, so that when a member, coming in suddenly, called for his jacket and his stockings, up went the pole, and down came the goods without a moment's delay, and all correct. This remarkable young person has[Pg 408] his proper and highly-developed successor in Gibbon, the house-steward at the present Mid-Surrey club at Richmond, who, though he has nearly a thousand members to consider, knows so well the particularities and possessions of them all. Tom Dunn had his workshop in this iron shooting house, and here he kept a fair stock of clubs and balls, and did his own repairs. Presently some of the members suggested to him that it would be agreeable if he stored some eatables and drinkables in his shop for their sustenance and comfort, before and after rounds; and so he laid in a stock of wines and spirits, sandwiches and eggs, and so forth, which had of necessity to be laid out on his bench where there were varnish, shavings, sawdust and pitch as well. Behold here the early London golfer! It is an interesting historical fact, that when a few years after its establishment, and just before the Tom Dunn era, the club first thought of engaging a professional, the committee set it on record that "they took a very favourable view of young Tom Morris's application for the post."

The people who accuse the moderns of being over fond of prizes in competitions—and a nasty name they call them!—might be told the tale of the old golfing baronet of Wimbledon, now dead, who once won five shillings, being his half share of the third prize in the sweepstakes attached to the monthly medal competition there. It was the first prize that this keen but unfortunate golfer had ever won, and he begged the permission of the committee to be allowed to add more money for a richer keepsake. The consent of the authorities was graciously given, whereupon the prize-winner purchased for himself a golden-eagle writing stand for which he gave a hundred sovereigns, adding ninety-nine pounds fifteen shillings to the prize-money. Friends, not being golfers, who called upon[Pg 409] him had the prize exhibited to them, and they said, "Goodness, what a fine player you must be!" He felt he was, and that the prize was worth the money.

When the 'nineties of the last century were reached golf began to spread in London, and such clubs as Northwood with its "Death or Glory" Hole, Tooting Bec, and Mid-Surrey laid the foundation for the great London golf that was soon to come. This Mid-Surrey club with its thousand members, its financial turnover of thirty thousand pounds a year, its hundred thousand rounds that are played on that excellent course in twelve months without its showing hardly the wear of a blade of grass, the twenty thousand lunches that are eaten by their members, the four thousand pounds that were spent in one year lately on the improvement of the course, is, I believe, the busiest golfing institution in the world. It is well said that there is nearly always a couple driving off from that first teeing ground near the rails in the Old Deer Park. And one might add that as a place where golf is played in a plain but excellent spirit, without any fancy trappings, the club here is one of the best organised and managed in the world, and is a vast credit to the secretary, Mr. J. H. Montgomerie, while the course, whose putting greens are a match for any in existence, is a fine testimonial to that prince of greenkeepers, Peter Lees, who was lately captured by the Americans for a great new course on Long Island. Lees has been a great influence in the development of modern golf in England, and I know that he will make a great difference to American courses. And there is champion J. H. Taylor as the club's professional. In a special way Mid-Surrey stands for London golf.

It has come to this, that we no longer fear to speak and write of the great excellence of the London golf courses. Sunningdale at the beginning of the present[Pg 410] century opened up a new era not only in London golf but in golf in general—the period of the inland courses of a far higher class, better and more interesting in every respect than anything that had ever been dreamt of before. Sunningdale was followed by Huntercombe and Walton Heath, of which Sir George Riddell has assisted to make such a magnificent success. There have come after them Worplesdon, Burhill, Bramshot, Stoke Poges, Sandy Lodge, Coombe Hill, St. George's Hill, and

many others all belonging to the same class. Many of us hold to the fancy that Sunningdale, the mother of the new sort of courses, is still the best and most charming of them all. She is the Berkshire jewel; magnificent. But comparisons are not easily made, for, most remarkably and happily, these new modern inland courses that are setting an example to the world and which the world is following wherever it can afford it, vary enormously in character, in appearance, in the precise sort of golf that they present and offer, whereas at the beginning of inland golf we had the fancy, and the fancy truly led to fact, that in the main all inland courses must be the same—plain, flat, one cross bunker here, another there, and then the green. Not only the architecture, but, far more than that in its beneficial effects, the greenkeeping has been improved, soils are understood, they are fortified and seeds are adapted to them, and results are achieved which not ten years ago would have been regarded as impossible. The result is that we have fairways and putting greens on some of our best inland courses near London which are rarely excelled at the seaside, although nothing can ever give to inland turf that firm springiness—a term slightly paradoxical but one easily appreciated—which is the characteristic of good seaside links. No longer is good inland golf to be despised. It has charms all its own, and it has the [Pg 411] distinction that golf as we know it to-day would never have existed if it were not for the inland courses. There are fewer hedges on them now than once there were, and no more ditches than there should be.

## §

To a section of old conservatives it may seem a dreadful thing to say, but it is the truth that one of the reasons why we love our golf of London, praise it and rejoice in it, is because of its glorious trees. We know courses on the coast where there is never a tree or a bush to be seen, and never one to be avoided in the playing. The golfers who live and play and die in those parts know nothing of the splendour of trees and the leaves that come and go, and knowing nothing they will even sometimes wrongfully say that no golf course ever should have a tree about it. Golf is a game of Nature; allow it then all the best effects that Nature can supply. Permit it the trees that the townsmen otherwise so seldom see; cutting them down, hewing them away will not bring the ocean nearer nor liken the course more to seaside golf. Trees belong to the inland game as much as sandhills to the other, and when a question of removal arises, let constructors and committees reflect that a golfer can be made in a season and he perishes some time later, that a new hole can be made in a week and may be altered the week after, that some shots which are thought of might be hindered by the tree but that only one shot in a dozen is likely to be of the kind that is considered—and that the tree has taken ages to grow, and will live ages on, being more of eternity than many generations of golfers.

They may not always be conscious of the fact, but the people who live in towns and are cooped in them [Pg 412] constantly, abiding in flats, working in gloomy chambers and travelling in underground railways, derive more than half their golfing enjoyment from the vision of Nature, less adorned than in the public parks, with which they become associated in their golf—grass to tread upon, surrounding trees through which soft breezes croon, and timid clouds creeping slowly underneath the blue. There is nothing so good as the golf of the true seaside links; there could not be. In this, the real thing, we have land formations that are impossible on inland flatness; there are the wildness of dunes and bent that cannot be reproduced artificially away from the coast; we have the perfect turf that is ideal for the game and which has never yet been completely imitated away from shore, and above all, through the rich variety of situation and possibility, we have the course springing surprises on us all the time. This is golf in the highest, the stern, cold, enthralling game. London golf is a gentler thing, a little softer, but it has charms that are all its own, and they are the charms of green Nature and the delights of changing seasons. By the sea it is warm or it is cold, and there is little difference else from the beginning of the year to the end. But in London the golfer notices the seasons as he does nowhere else, and they are everything to him and his happiness. And the trees best tell him of the seasons, and it is then that he might exclaim, as Ruskin did, "What a great thought of God was that when He thought a tree!"

In this way the two most beautiful seasons of the year, spring and autumn, touching nearest the heart, creating inspirations and causing reflection, the germinal and the fall, are the most splendid times for golf in London, and at other inland places, and they are surely the best seasons of all for the enjoyment and happiness of [Pg 413] the game. But particularly they are London's seasons. In the spring there is the time for preparation, when all golfers are keen in a new life. Then the leaves of the trees are opened, and are there prettier scenes on any course than on some of those near London then? There is hardly to be fancied a better day than could be had at St. George's Hill or on the New Zealand course at Byfleet when the golden gorse is in bloom and gives out its rich perfume, while the trees that line the fairway all about are full to life again. Think, when May is come, of the glory of Sudbrooke Park, Cassiobury, of Sunningdale, even of Neasden, Northwood, and a hundred more. Then there comes the holiday time, and the seaside links, and the golf of London rests until the autumn, and then it is alive again; and let the faults of London golf be whatever they may, the players are few who are not happy to return to the old courses of home. Be they ever so poor they are their very own.

This of all others is the most delightful golfing season. The white sun of summer has been toned to gold, and the air is sweet and cool; the turf is moist again. It is soothing; but there is a pathos in it all that the golfer, sensitive and sympathetic observer as he has become, must always feel. One may tramp a country lane and notice little, but the men of this game have been trained to notice. Here present is the season of the fall, the rest after achievement, when Nature closes in upon herself and lapses to her sleep. She has done her season's work, done it wisely, ever well. So the fires of heaven burn low again. Green of the world turns russet and bronze, with flashes of scarlet and gold. A smell of earth that is moist with autumn dew rises in the morning air. When the round begins the sun warmth is not enough to dry away the little globules of the dew, tears of the sobbing night,[Pg 414] and the course has a glittering sheen upon it. From drooping branches of beeches and sycamores that half surround a putting green in a corner of the course, crackling leaves are falling and some must be moved before the intruding ball can be putted to its appointed place. As the little golfing company moves along to the adjoining tee more of these spent leaves come fluttering sadly down. But, a little sad as this may be, the golfer of the towns, with summer memories of mountains and hills and deep lanes still lingering in his mind, hearing the crooning of the summer seas and the lapping of waves near northern putting greens, has his consolations. He is grateful for the coppery leaves and the early dew, though they may hinder play a trifle. They are as echoes from the north and east and west. We see no dew in Piccadilly, and there are no mountains in the Strand.

THE END

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