IT WAS GOOD WHILE IT LASTED

By Henry Longhurst, M.P.

Some Press Comments

'A thoroughly racy and entertaining account of many things. He is interested in all manner of other things, and can describe them, not merely because he is observant and has a sense of humour, but for the best reason of all, that he has thoroughly enjoyed them.'—BERNARD DARWIN in COUNTRY LIFE.

'No one can doubt from his writing that he has so far thoroughly enjoyed his thirty-one years of life. To be able thus to convey this sense of enjoyment is no slight quality. He is full of "go," and carries his reader along with him, whether down the Cresta run or with the seething, surging crowd up the slope to the last green at St. Andrews.'—THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT.

'He is never short of opinions—a great asset in a book of this kind—and he states them as he states everything, with considerable frankness. This freedom of expression adds to the larger value, as well as the entertainment value, of a most enjoyable book.'—THE SKETCH.

'There are very many delightful people in this book, but perhaps the most engaging of all of them is the author himself with his ingenuous candour, his happy wit, and his neat estimations of men and manners.'—CURRENT LITERATURE.

'His book of memories, covering the pre-war decade, is racy and readable, and gives the reader a view into the minds of men as well as a survey of their stance and swing in the various games of life.'—THE OBSERVER.

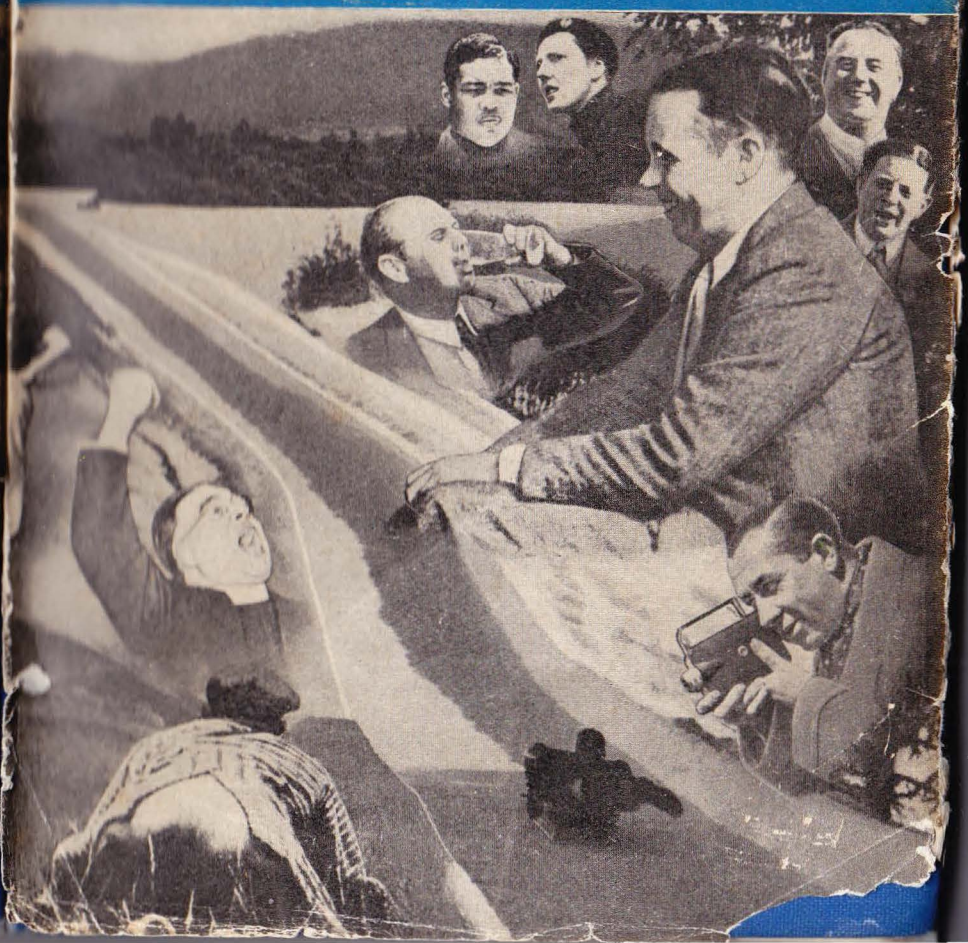
'It is hard to make up one's mind whether he is a great golfer or a great journalist. In fact, he is both.'—THE SUNDAY GRAPHIC.

'If one can handle a pen as skilfully as a mashie one is not likely to be bunkered as a sporting journalist. Mr. Henry Longhurst found himself well on the fairway as one of this country's most acceptable writers on golf in an enviably short time after he had passed through Charterhouse and Cambridge. His reminiscences of that pleasant career which the war cut short are by no means confined to the game on which he is an expert. There is much about the great players and the great courses of two continents, but even more about the eminent and odd people he has encountered in a life that entailed much trouble. His style is lively and polished.'—THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN.

It was good while it lasted
HENRY LONGHURST
Dent

DENT

It was good while it lasted
HENRY LONGHURST



8/6 net

Henry Longhurst's *It was Good while it Lasted* was published early in the war, and quickly reached a second edition. It was widely appreciated as a book of recollections and impressions of people and places in the pre-war decade, which besides being racy and readable gave the reader, as the *Observer* reviewer said, 'a view into the minds of men as well as a survey of their stance and swing in the various games of life.'

After having been 'out of print' for a little time the book is now reissued in wartime economy dress, and without the photographs which adorned the earlier editions, but at a cheaper price.

Longhurst joined the army as a driver soon after writing this book, and became successively gunner, cadet, subaltern in an armoured division and captain on a headquarters staff. In December 1943 he was elected Conservative Member of Parliament for Acton. He is now engaged in writing a successor to *It was Good while it Lasted.*

Made in Great Britain
at The Temple Press
Letchworth
Herts

(Sj 770)

IT WAS GOOD WHILE IT LASTED

PUBLISHERS' NOTE.—Thousands of people who have never touched a golf club were constant readers of Henry Longhurst's articles on golf, for he is an even better writer than golfer. *It was good while it lasted* is not a book about golf. It is a book about people. As a working journalist for most of his adult life, Mr. Longhurst has met all manner of persons in all manner of places and circumstances. There are vivid descriptions of Joe Louis in the ring, Father Coughlin in his stadium-pulpit, the enigmatic Henry Cotton, the master-showman Walter Hagen in the club-house, and Lord Beaverbrook in nudist mood. Longhurst joined the Army as a driver, soon after writing this book, and became successively gunner, cadet, subaltern in an armoured division and captain on a head-quarters staff. In December 1943 he was elected Conservative Member of Parliament for Acton. He is now engaged in writing a successor to *It was good while it lasted.*

IT WAS GOOD WHILE IT LASTED

By

HENRY LONGHURST

J. M. DENT AND SONS LTD.
LONDON AND LETCHWORTH

Made in Great Britain
by
HAZELL, WATSON & VINEY, LTD.
London and Aylesbury

First Published 1941

Reprinted 1941

First Published in this edition 1945

TO MY

FATHER AND MOTHER,

THROUGH WHOSE SACRIFICES IT WAS SO GOOD WHILE IT LASTED

THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED
IN COMPLETE CONFORMITY
WITH THE AUTHORIZED
ECONOMY STANDARDS

FOREWORD

THE war has broken up the pattern of our lives, set us to work at new and often uncomfortable jobs, removed the word 'holiday' from our daily speech, and left us with nostalgic reflections on the 'good old days.'

The good old days will never return. In saying this, I know I am repeating what people were saying twenty-five years ago; but what matter? It was true then. It is true now. Good old days never return. If they did, they wouldn't be good old days.

The impressions of people and places that follow are by no means 'serious.' If you have met the people and been to the places, you may be interested to compare your reactions with mine. If you haven't, I hope you may derive some amusement by repairing the omission.

This book was written at the beginning of the war and I think it can be said with modest truth that those who read it liked it. Letters, which I treasure, have reached me from service men in obscure stations all over the globe saying that it 'took their minds off the war.' They enjoyed it, they said, because it was nothing to do with 'Why France fell' or 'What to do with Germany.' The present edition is offered as a result of this encouragement. War-time austerity has caused it to be slightly cut down, and we are unable to present the sixty-eight photographs which adorned the original, but the text is unchanged, except for a few alterations in the story of that unparalleled character, Wing-Commander Douglas Bader, D.S.O., D.F.C.

Above all, this book is not an autobiography. I conceive it to be of no interest to you that I was born in the village of Bromham in the county of Beds on the 18th of March, 1909, or to learn of my early encounters in life's battles. On the other hand, you will appreciate that it is difficult to describe one's contacts with other people without a fairly liberal use of the word 'I.'

Nowadays both reader and author are engaged in more serious pursuits. The life reflected in this book is mostly a memory, but the sort of memory upon which many of us find comfort in dwelling as a contrast to the tedium of war. In that humble spirit this new edition is offered.

H. L.

House of Commons.
1945.

CONTENTS

BREACH OF PROMISE

THE world of journalism has laid bare almost everything under the sun except itself. To ten million penny readers journalism and journalists are still a mystery. Perhaps we should all be better off if they weren't—but that 's beside the point.

The point is that people still look on the quite ordinary folk who are concerned with newspapers as a race apart. 'What made you pick on that?' 'How did you start?' Even in my own humble line I must have been asked those questions a hundred times.

So I am going to start with a short breach of my promise not to write an autobiography, and say something of how and why I began a newspaper career. I do it because, if people keep asking about something, that subject must, in a general way, be a matter of interest. 'If it will interest the readers,' as my late editor, John ('Burn the Forests') Gordon, was fond of saying, 'I don't care what it is.'

The accepted entry to Fleet Street is via a provincial newspaper. That was not the way in which I entered the profession myself, though I sometimes wish it had been. Apprenticed to a provincial newspaper, the smaller the better, you can learn every angle of its production. In the London office of a great national newspaper you will see only your own department. I worked for seven years for the *Evening Standard* without ever entering the machine room.

The alternative entry to what is known to those who do not work in it as the Street of Adventure, or, worse, the Street of Ink, is via an ability to set down on paper one's knowledge of a specialized subject—politics, economics, polo, the rearing of poultry, what you will—or a sufficient lack of self-consciousness to record emotions concerning new-born lambs, the growing of primroses and other flowers, the noble courage of the poor, mother love, and so forth, that the normal Englishman has been brought up to keep to himself.

For myself I went in through the door marked 'special knowledge,' though, heaven knows, the subject of that knowledge was trivial enough in itself—the game of golf. I had spent three months as a commercial traveller, selling, or rather offering for sale, advertising space in the *Hardware Trade Journal*—mostly to

persons whose business was in no way connected with the hardware trade. It was an experience I would not have missed for worlds—or undertake again for a thousand pounds—but it was not my life's vocation. With no capital except an ability to play golf and the considerable sum that had been sunk in my education, I looked around for someone willing even to pay the interest on the money. There were no takers. I knew no specialized business or profession, and could not afford a long apprenticeship in order to learn. So I had to fall back on the golf.

On a basis of working for three months for nothing and then being paid whatever salary seemed possible, I joined the now defunct monthly golf paper *Tee Topics*. My first Fleet Street editor was amiable, good-humoured George Philpot, who later had the unparalleled ill fortune to be sitting in the one carriage that has been smashed up on the London underground railway in twenty years. George welcomed the arrival of a young fellow so eager for the fray at so reasonable a wage, and I set to work with much gusto in the dingy little Bouverie Street office.

This, in a sense, was like the provincial experience I have quoted as so desirable. We had only a couple of rooms in the office, and one gained a working knowledge of every stage of the paper's production except the actual printing. When Eric Martin Smith, who had written an article for us, rang up to know when he was going to be paid, I remarked loftily that I would consult the accounts department. 'Yes,' he replied. 'Two paces to the right, I suppose.' He was exactly correct.

I wrote a monthly article under my own name, for which George handsomely stumped up four guineas, and a good deal of other stuff besides; and George would take me around to help butter up the advertisers. Altogether it was excellent, if unprofitable, fun, and I wondered why I had not thought of this life in the first place.

It was Mr Winston Churchill who wrote: 'Rational, industrious, useful beings are divided into two classes—those whose work is work and whose pleasures pleasure, and those whose work and pleasure are one. Fortune has favoured the children who belong to the second class.' My work and pleasure were one.

Meanwhile, the financial situation was temporarily eased by holing a putt from under the holly bush behind the last green at Woking, while taking a day off to play in the *Golf Illustrated* Gold Vase. It won me twenty-eight pounds in sweep money.

The three months drew to an end, and it became uncomfortably clear that *Tee Topics* could not pay me a salary even if they wished. You can't get blood out of a stone. And it was at this moment that by the grace of God the *Sunday Times* happened to look for a golf correspondent.

Sir Herbert Morgan, who occupied an indefinable but influential position on the *Sunday Times*, had been playing golf, it appeared, with James Braid at Walton Heath. He had asked him what he should do in the matter of finding a golf correspondent, and James, for which I shall bless him to my dying day, remarked that a young fellow by the name of Longhurst who used to play for Cambridge had recently started writing about golf and might be worth looking into.

When I opened the letter from Sir Herbert inquiring politely whether I was 'available to undertake further work,' I was up Bouverie Street and into the *Sunday Times* office as fast as my legs would carry me. Three hundred a year was the opening fee, and next day there started an amicable, easy-going relationship with that sedate and dignified organ that lasted unbroken till Hitler put golf correspondents out of business.

Life on the *Sunday Times* was leisurely and comfortable, rising from complete indolence on Tuesdays to a crescendo of activity on Saturday nights. I wrote a series of articles on golf clubs, entitled 'Homes of London Golf,' and felt for the first time that air of solidity experienced only by a man who has a series running in a newspaper. I reviewed a few books, contributed paragraphs to the 'Talk of the Town,' and wrote occasional articles, including a learned treatise on the economic situation in Russia, which, alas, on re-reading, I find to be completely over my head.

Excitements were rare, though I shall not forget one summer afternoon when I had cleared away a big pile of old newspapers and thrown them into a huge wicker basket. I lit a cigarette and idly threw away the match. Very soon I remember making a mental note of how exceptionally hot the sun was that day. Unfortunately it was not the sun. It was the basket on fire.

I trod down the papers, but by this time the wickerwork was blazing, and in a frighteningly short time the flames were ten feet high. Windows flew up all along the other side of Fleet Street. People stopped and gesticulated on the pavement.

The floor was stone and nothing inflammable was near. If I stayed still, I knew the fire would burn itself out. If I opened the door, it might fan the flames (or so I had been brought up

to believe, for it was always said that when my father's establishment in Bedford was burnt down to the tune of £30,000, a smouldering flue was set going by the action of the police in breaking down the doors to investigate). On the other hand, if any one should walk in at the height of the conflagration and find that I was doing nothing better than stand still and watch it . . .

After dithering for a minute or so, I went to fetch the manager. He came along rather unimpressed, took one look at the column of flame, let out a yell, ran back to his office, and returned with a glass of water off his desk. He cast it dramatically on the fire, where it made a very faint hiss and was consumed. We were still running round in circles when the fire burnt itself out.

It was not until next day that I realized I need only have lifted the telephone and summoned the office fireman.

The beginning of life's separate stages, kindergarten, preparatory school, public school, university (if any), the first and each successive job, even election to a new club, is marked by the painful sensations peculiar to the 'new boy'—the fear of speaking out of turn, of addressing the head master by the wrong title, or making a fool of oneself in front of the other boys.

Journalism is certainly no exception, as the tales of junior reporters' blunders that are gleefully passed round the profession bear witness. But nowhere can the process be more nearly painless than on the *Sunday Times*.

Every one was friendly and had time for a passing word of encouragement. Gradually one learnt to accept with indifference the cuts and alterations in one's copy that come so hard to the novice. I remember the horror with which, when I had opened an article on a golf club—Royal Mid-Surrey, I think—with the observation that 'in eighteen hundred and ninety-seven a farmer, himself a tenant of Her Majesty, had fallen out with his sub-tenants,' I found it altered to 'himself a tenant of the gracious Queen Victoria.' What was in the mind of the dolt who altered this I still cannot say, and, perhaps because it was the first, the change still riles me. Nowadays it would not worry me for a second. I probably should not notice it anyway.

There is no possible doubt in my mind—and, goodness knows, this observation is nothing new—that luck occurs in cycles. Broadly these cycles may last some years, but within them are smaller cycles of which one is more fully conscious at the time. Some people put it down to the stars, but a glance at the damned

nonsense served up by so-called 'astrologers' in the public sheets rules out this theory. All I know is that there are times when everything goes right, when you seem surrounded by an aura of good fortune, and times when no amount of energy, initiative, or other desirable qualities brings the least reward. Any man who fails to be aware of these periods (my own generally last from a fortnight to three weeks: others report them shorter) and to chase his luck when it is in, and correspondingly mark time when it 's out, deserves what he gets—or doesn't get.

I ran into a lucky spell early in 1933, around my twenty-fourth birthday. Lack of wherewithal, combined with a surfeit of spare time—the most expensive kind of time in the world—set me looking for some fresh outlet, and an article in a weekly paper seemed indicated. Luck alone can have arranged that only one suitable weekly had no golf article, that this happened to be the best of the bunch, that it also happened to be looking for a golf writer, and that when I applied for the job my name had already been mentioned by a friend to the editor.

The paper was the *Tatler* and the editor Edward Huskinson. From February of that year I contributed the *Tatler's* golf page for three hundred and forty weeks with a break of only one week in 1936, when I was on the way to America to watch the Walker Cup Match. I make no bones about saying that I look back with pride and gratitude on this happy association. Incidentally it more than doubled my income.

The next step, a month or two later, was so fantastically fortunate that I hardly like to record it. An acquaintance rang me up to draw my attention to an advertisement in *The Times*, wondering if I 'd be interested. It read: 'Prominent London daily requires golf correspondent: sound knowledge of the game essential. Box ——.' I was not interested. I was sitting pretty and life was good. Why alter it for the hurly-burly of daily journalism?

My friend asked me which was the 'prominent London daily.' I replied that I supposed it to be the *Daily Herald*, since all the others already had golf correspondents of their own, but that I would find out. I drew out a sheet of notepaper, wrote on it: 'Dear Sir, I am much interested in your advertisement in *The Times*, yours faithfully, ——,' gave it to the boy to post, and thought no more about it.

Two days later came a letter inviting me to call on the editor of the *Evening Standard*. Then I woke up. Supposing I could

serve all three? Once again I was round the corner and up the street in no time. I was received by George Gilliat and the interview was over in ten minutes. I mentioned what I thought was a staggeringly large figure, and that I should want permission to continue writing for my other employers. Next day he sent for me again and told me I could start on these terms right away. My income had more than quadrupled itself in less than three months. My feet scarcely touched the ground as I retired from the Shoe Lane office and made my way to a telephone box to tell the lady we should be dressing for dinner.

WRITING ABOUT GOLF

It 's a great thing, when you strike lucky in this life, to know it at the time, and not merely to wake up to the fact when it 's all over. I struck lucky with the *Evening Standard* and knew it; and the luck held consistently for seven years. Even the end of that happy period was not so unfortunate as it might have been, for when the war extinguished the line of life in which I had specialized I was getting tired of it anyway.

But, my word! It was good while it lasted!

It was a life that took me, first class at someone else's expense, throughout each spring, summer, and autumn to some of the loveliest parts of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, to say nothing of twenty odd visits to the Continent and a couple to the United States, and brought me into contact all through the year with a succession of new and interesting people in pretty well every walk of life. And all this between the ages of twenty-four and thirty, when most young men are condemned to climb wearily up life's ladder by way of the office desk.

When once you 're used to living a life not bound down by office hours and regulations, a life in which you can come and go as you please and wear any clothes you please, and a life spent largely in the open air among cheerful and ever-changing company, you come to view almost with horror the existence of those who take the same train every morning of their lives.

Sometimes I would see them arriving at the big London stations in the morning as I made my way to the country, packed like human sardines, five a side sitting and five more

standing in every compartment. Their eyes were weary before the day's work had begun and there was a dreadful sameness in their faces. Like the gentleman in the Bible, for whom I have always had a sneaking sympathy, I thanked God with honest sincerity that I was not as one of these.

The life of the golf correspondent had other, rarely recognized, advantages—and in setting them down I risk all manner of accusations of vanity.

It was creative; it was constructive; and it gave pleasure to other people—and until you 've had such a job, you don't know what a deep satisfaction there is in that. The knowledge that one's writings may entertain, amuse, and divert from their trivial daily round some hundreds of thousands of people lends inspiration to one's efforts. I found it a sobering thought, as I took my ease in the sunshine at Sandwich or Saunton or Turnberry or Gleneagles, or any of the lovely places where golf is played, to reflect that, at that moment, nearly every one of those people would gladly have changed places with me. I liked to fancy myself as a kind of intermediary between the sunny, carefree world outside and the prisoners in their offices in the city.

'Out of my way,' I 'd sometimes say. 'I 'm watching for a million!' The tone was facetious (and the circulation of my employers a trifle exaggerated) but the sentiment was perfectly sincere.

Nothing makes more surely for human happiness and contentment than the sense that one's work is *creating* something. That is why my own most prized possessions (and note that these troublesome times have given us, if nothing else, an infallible criterion of real values; the definition of your most prized possession is 'that which you carry first with you into the air-raid shelter') are the books of cuttings in which are preserved most of the two million odd words I turned out in the eight years before the war.

The stockbroker goes to his office and dabbles in his stocks and shares, the banker is busy totting up other people's money, and the solicitor looking after other people's affairs; and often they make a very good thing out of it. But ask them what they did on a certain day and the answer is—another's day work at the office. Ask me the same question and I can look in the book and show you. It may not have been an epic of prose, but it came out of *my* head and no one else could have written it in just that way. A poor thing, in fact, but mine own. The point

that other people might have written it a great deal better is irrelevant.

Perhaps I take this aspect of a comparatively humble line of life too seriously? I don't think so. We are much too liable to measure the rewards of labour in terms of mere money instead of in terms of the aggregate happiness it gives. In other words, would you rather be a Corporation rubbish collector at four pounds a week or a gardener in the heart of the Sussex Downs at two pounds ten?

I once worked out an astonishing statistic, to which I challenge denial. I used to do a piece every Monday in the *Evening Standard* which I know to have been widely read. It was eight or nine hundred words long, and it took me a maximum of three-quarters of an hour to write. Now if only one in five of that newspaper's readers read it (not an immodest estimate, as you may agree), and if it took them only four minutes each, then in that three-quarters of an hour I had been the means of providing an aggregate of *two hundred and seventy-seven days* of entertainment. Deny it if you can!

Is that conceit? Certainly not. It applies to every newspaper. A man who contributes a leading feature article to the *Daily Express*, with a circulation of substantially more than two millions, may count on having given *ten years* of entertainment!

We all have a streak of vanity, and here was a job that offered it full scope. Say what you like, it's a matter of excusable self-satisfaction to have people know your name. The sport-ridden public of pre-war days could not tell you the names of the Cabinet, or the Public Trustee, or the Attorney-General, or the head of His Majesty's Royal Air Force, or the other distinguished folk who spent their lives working on the public behalf, often for salaries that would make a prize-fighter wince with contempt—but you couldn't stump them on sport. And they knew the writers, if anything, better than the players.

Often I would be introduced to men in high places for whose talents I had a profound respect, men whom I instinctively addressed as 'sir.' To my embarrassment I would find the boot on the other leg. 'Are you the fellow whose articles I read?' they'd say. 'I'm delighted to meet you. Now, I say, tell me . . .' Generally they added: 'I always imagined you to be a much older man,' and that was most flattering.

There was an exquisite satisfaction, too, in finding oneself very often to be the 'they' of that all-embracing expression 'They

say . . .' One would hear a couple of old boys in their arm-chairs discussing some current golfing topic—the latest Cotton controversy, maybe, or the prospects for the University match.

'They say this feller, Cotton . . .' one would hear, or, 'They say that Cambridge 'll have a better chance if the wind blows.' Sometimes they'd quote whole sentences out of one's latest piece. *C'est moi qui parle!*

A source of constant surprise to me is the ignorance of the average 'Constant Reader' as to the methods by which his newspaper is produced. This atmosphere of mystery leads him to endow all persons connected with newspapers, however remotely, with a kind of magical omniscience. I do not exaggerate when I tell you that I have frequently been asked to ascertain in advance the winners of horse races. 'They must know in your office what 's going to win, don't they?' say the poor dupes.

If only they could have glanced inside that office they might have seen my colleague 'Falcon,' cigarette glued to lower lip, poring day in and day out over his books of form and pasting race results into his note-books. Or they might have caught a fleeting glimpse of 'Ajax' as he dropped into the office on his way from one meeting to another. Here were two of the most successful racing tipsters of modern times: yet they were happy enough to see their 'nap' turn up once in three days. No. A working acquaintance with the sporting staff of a newspaper teaches you only one lesson in betting on horses. That is, be a bookmaker.

'How do you get your stuff to the office?' was another favourite query, and the simple reply: 'Why, I telephone it,' never failed to evoke its gasp of astonishment. 'What, telephone all that?' they used to say.

At all the bigger tournaments each agency and newspaper had its own telephone, and here I will pay a tribute to the efficiency and courtesy of His Majesty's telephone service as I experienced it in the last two or three years. We were able to abandon the practice of booking fixed-time calls put through from London, owing to the certainty that we could ourselves get through to London whenever we wanted. From Scotland, Devonshire, Wales, wherever we might be, we found ourselves talking to the office within a minute or two of lifting the receiver. From Portrush, in Northern Ireland, we were once connected with the office, and by them to the man waiting in the telephone-

room for the copy to be dictated, in eighty-eight seconds. When you consider that my own calls were put through, to catch the various editions, at 8.15 and 10.30 a.m., and 12.40, 1.40, 2.40, 3.40, 4.40, and, very often, 5.10 p.m., and that half a dozen of us were wanting London numbers at similar intervals, and that others were calling Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, and other towns at the same time, it becomes apparent that the Post Office was doing a good job of work.

For myself, life was meant to be made easier, though it did not always work out that way, by the provision of a boy from the office to accompany me as telephonist—the point being that much of the play might take place a couple of miles from the clubhouse, and it was manifestly impossible to watch it and at the same time run back and telephone to London every hour.

There was, however, a snag. No sooner had I trained up a boy in the way I wished him to go (a process that took approximately one season), than the boy would become over age for this type of employment and be sacked by the office, leaving me to start the wearisome business all over again.

I had to teach them the elementary golfing terms like 'tee' and 'green'; I had to teach them how to use a telephone, and how to enunciate clearly enough into it for the man at the other end to get a rough idea of what I was writing; and I had to teach them—a difficult one, this—the golden rule to restrain their natural cockney exuberance and be civil and patient with telephone exchange operators—who are themselves the most patient folk in the world.

Finding someone in a surging crowd of five thousand persons is like looking for a needle in the proverbial haystack, and despite the most minute directions as to where we were to meet for the next batch of copy I was in a constant state of having lost my boy.

'You 're looking very worried,' said a friend one day.

' Yes,' I replied, 'I 've lost that —— boy of mine again!'

' *Oh*,' said he, '*I never realized you were married.*'

I became a combined master, tutor, father-confessor, adviser, banker, and friend to half a dozen of these boys, many of whom had never been farther away from London than a day trip to Southend. One or two of them were poor stuff, but for the most part they were fine ambitious lads who made the most, from the educational point of view, of the strange new expansion in their lives.

One precocious young specimen was a source of constant uneasiness till I managed tactfully to replace him. Attiring himself in what he assumed to be correct golfing wear, he turned up in voluminous plus-fours and red garters, and almost the first thing he did was to push his way into the bar of the refreshment tent between George Greenwood, who had been writing golf for the *Daily Telegraph* for a quarter of a century, and another of my colleagues, and announce: 'Have this one with me!'

It was this same lad, incidentally, who was heard, at a women's championship, to telephone the name of Mrs M. L. Clarke as 'Mrs M for Mother, L for Lovely, Clarke.' I hastened to tell the lady in question and she was not allowed to forget it for years.

Two years before the war, when I was despairing of initiating yet another boy into the mysteries of the profession, I had the good fortune to find a young fellow of nineteen or so who had already done one or two minor reporting jobs for the agencies, and was anxious for a chance of attending the big tournaments to gain experience. His name was John Webb, and his father is on the staff of the *Daily Herald*.

This paragon of good-natured efficiency made life divinely, almost dangerously, easy. He knew the game, he knew the players, he was a tremendous stickler for factual accuracy—and he wrote shorthand. After a couple of seasons he became a thoroughly competent golf journalist in his own right, and there was nothing I could teach him. By now I should have been battling with another boy.

Working for an evening paper means a continuous contest against the clock. If you are late for the edition, you might as well not bother to send the stuff at all. But the perpetual hustle and bustle had one great compensation. At half-past three in the afternoon I had finished—leaving the efficient Webb to add the few lines necessary at half-past four—and I could be away at some neighbouring course playing a peaceful round on my own. Returning at half-past seven I would find my luckless colleagues on the morning papers waiting for the last man to come in before they could start their 'intro.'s.' From half-past four onwards all the players could drop dead on the course so far as I was concerned. They were too late to get their demise into the *Evening Standard*.

In the winter-time things were slack, though the money rolled in just the same, and it was easy to let the mind grow idle; but

there were days in distinct contrast, when I could look back on as good a day's labour as any one in the country. I remember one Saturday at St Andrews when, for the first time in history, we won the Walker Cup from the United States. There were eight matches, and each had to be covered in full, apart from general observations on the course, the crowds, the weather, and what not. The 'Sports Diary' and the 'Londoner's Diary' also required their contributions.

Altogether this meant about three thousand words. When, at five o'clock, it was all over, the next task was to sit down and write two thousand words in different terms for the *Sunday Times* by half-past six. After that there came a broadcast for a quarter of an hour to the United States at seven o'clock, and another of ten minutes in the home programme soon after nine. A damned good day's work, though I say it myself.

Incidentally, this last broadcast was rather successful, not through any contribution of mine, but through the efforts of John Beck, the British captain. I dragged him from the celebratory dinner that was proceeding in the Royal and Ancient clubhouse across to the little room above Robert Forgan's shop from which we broadcast, and we did an impromptu cross-talk. Not only was he in the middle of an excellent dinner and all that went with it, not only had he just captained the only British team ever to defeat the Americans at golf, but he had also just heard that his wife had won the championship of Ireland that afternoon. He was in tremendous form.

Newspapers are curious employers, with alternating fits of extraordinary generosity and meanness. On the eve of the day before this Walker Cup match I received a message telephoned casually from the office asking if I would kindly take photographs of each of the United States team next morning and put them on the train, complete with captions. It might have been the easiest thing in the world.

Now that I have spent a little longer in Fleet Street I have come to the regretful conclusion that my proper line of reply was: 'Find your own photographer. My business is writing.' Alternatively I should have replied: 'What 's it worth?' Instead, I said: 'Certainly.'

So I chased round St Andrews, and one by one ran to ground the eight Americans and Francis Ouimet, their non-playing captain. I took various pictures of the nine of them in action and, without seeing so much as the negative, wrote long captions

to each, covering their ages, appearance, personal history, style of play, and what not. I put the result of my labours on the night train, and that, for the moment, was that.

When I returned to London and looked at the files, I found that these pictures and captions had, for the early editions, made up the entire middle two pages of the paper. This must be a unique honour either for a sporting subject or for an amateur photographer—the sort of display the professional photographer dreams about. 'I shall get a pat on the back for this,' thought I.

Alas, I was younger then. No one even mentioned that the pictures had been received in the office. I was almost surprised when they did not query the 3*s*. 6*d*. I charged in my expenses for the film.

On another Saturday at St Andrews, when Hector Thomson and Jim Ferrier were playing the amateur championship final, meaning for me another four-thousand-word day, the boy came out with a message that the *Sunday Express* had rung up. They had a plan of the course in the office, and would I telephone a description showing exactly *where each stroke for each player had finished at each of the thirty-six holes*?

Anything to oblige, said I. Having a photographic memory for golf shots, I could picture the two rounds clearly enough in my head. But what a nightmare was that phone call! The man at the other end knew little or nothing about golf and the line was none too good. Instead of marking the spots that I indicated on the map, he insisted on taking it all down on his typewriter. I stood in a small telephone box shouting for fifty-eight minutes. Then they sent me a fiver!

Naturally enough, a life of this order had its comic interludes. One that still makes me laugh when I think of it, even when I 'm alone, occurred at Porthcawl. The clubhouse is right on the beach, and the gales they get there are something tremendous. The press tent had been rocking and heaving and creaking all day. More than once I thought it would capsize. About four o'clock I was making my way between the entrance flaps when an almighty gust pushed the whole thing over sideways. I leapt clear, and the last thing I remember seeing, as the tent foundered with all hands, was the irate countenance of George Greenwood. A moment later he and its other occupants—unfortunately there were only about half a dozen at the time—were floundering on the grass under a mass of canvas, a fine jumble of trestle tables, telephones, papers, pencils, hats, coats,

shooting sticks, and humanity. The tent itself, viewed from the safe side, reminded one of a sack of ferrets—you can tell there 's something alive in it but you can't tell what it is. In this case, however, the language made it pretty plain.

The gale tore the tent away, revealing in all manner of postures George Greenwood, Sir Guy Campbell of *The Times*, and Miss Betty Debenham of the *Daily Sketch*. Hundreds of sheets of paper were whisked away, some of them to be picked up later in the town of Porthcawl a mile and a half distant, others to be caught in a kind of gravel-pit and rubbish dump near by. News of the disaster spread quickly to the clubhouse bar, whence golf correspondents were seen to bolt like rabbits. Many of them had already written most of their story for the day. When they reached the tent, their stories were bowling briskly down the promenade towards Porthcawl. Fred Pignon of the *Daily Mail* lost nearly fifteen hundred words and had to start all over again. Meanwhile, a good many were searching in the rubbish dump, pulling odd sheets of paper from bushes and from under tin cans, only to cast them down in disgust as they found them to be someone else's from the day before.

I stood above the rubbish dump, watching George Greenwood spiking sheets of paper with his shooting stick like the scavengers in the parks, and made an observation that has been held up against him ever since.

'*No good looking for your stuff down there, George*,' said I. '*You 're a day too early !*'

There exists among golf journalists a commendable degree of professional co-operation. That cannot be said of any other sport that I 've reported. In other games which are played in an arena before a stationary crowd news of what has happened is equally available to all. The game is there for all to see, and one man can see as well as the next, unless he happens to be in the bar at the vital moment. If you didn't see it, well, that 's just too bad. The rest aren't going to tell you.

In golf this does not apply. Matches are taking place all over the links, maybe a couple of miles from each other, and the most hard-working and conscientious of us could not be in more than one place at any given time. Information has to be gleaned not only from spectators but, more often and more reliably, from each other. That information was given freely to any one who asked for it—even to the distinguished morning-

paper writer who arrived habitually at lunch-time with the words: 'Well, anybody know anything?'

Our most valued asset in this line used to be Peter Lawless, the massively genial correspondent of the *Morning Post*, who thought nothing of trailing three times round the longest championship course in a single day. He had seen everything, and, what 's more, had got it written down in a book. I don't know what we 'd have done without him.

The pleasure of one's work depends, in my experience, as much on the people you have to work with as on the work itself, and in this respect I was on a fortunate wicket. It was an amiable, cheerful crowd that trailed round the tournaments each spring and summer. There being little rivalry, except in the individual manner in which we treated the common story, we didn't get on each other's nerves.

Sometimes the daily round was enlivened by obtaining an 'exclusive revelation'—some item of news which, trivial enough to-day, seemed of much importance at the time. Miss Wethered, perhaps, was going to turn professional, or was going to the United States, or somebody else, 'fed up with it all,' was going to retire. It gave me a malicious pleasure, when I had telephoned some such exclusive titbit, to sit back and watch the result, maybe four hundred miles away from where it was being published. When, half an hour later, the next edition of the *Evening Standard* was on sale on the streets of London, I knew that telephones in the press tent would soon be ringing, and frantic messages circulating for C. B. Macfarlane of the *Evening News*, and Anthony Spalding of the *Star*, and the representatives of the three agencies, asking them to telephone their office at once.

'What's this story about So-and-so in the *Standard*?' an irate voice would ask at the other end.

' Oh, it 's nothing,' they 'd say. ' It 's been expected for some time.'

Then they would have to rush out and follow up the story for their next edition. And how do I know this? Why, because it very often happened the other way round!

Though there was little or no jealousy between the correspondents, there was an intense and often ludicrous jealousy between the newspapers that employed them. Sometimes I used to take a busman's holiday and play in a golf tournament myself, whereupon our two rivals papers would go to laughable lengths to keep my name out of their columns. The *Evening*

News always used to print the names of the teams that were to represent London clubs against the Universities on Saturdays. When I was playing, they used to print only eleven names! I forget whether they printed my name when I won the German championship, but I know they were much perturbed when I was defending it in the following year. A fellow on that journal, who would get the sack if I printed his name, told me four years later that the instructions of the sporting staff were: 'If that fellow wins, give it three lines. Otherwise don't print his name.'

Once I really thought I had got them cornered. I went down to Bramshot to play in the *Golf Illustrated* Gold Vase, to which the opposition were each giving about three-quarters of a column. I got round in seventy-two, which, though I say it, is a damned good score at Bramshot, and found that, jointly with Andrew McNair, I was leading the field. Next best was a seventy-four. I did not see how they were to get out of this one, for the evening papers were only to give a description of the morning round.

They got out of it very easily, however. They left me out completely. In the list of scores in small type at the bottom they altered my name, to make it further unrecognizable, from Henry to H. C. 'First with the news,' indeed!

Golf, even when it became dramatized, publicized, and commercialized, remained a 'clean' sport. There was no 'fixing' of fights, no luring of professionals from one club to another with intrigues behind the scenes and astronomically ludicrous transfer fees. Apart from the surreptitious distribution of free golf balls by certain manufacturers to bogus amateurs, against which I campaigned, almost alone, for five years, there was no 'dirty work' to be ferreted out by the journalist—and you have no idea, until you have had to try it in other spheres, what a relief that can be. I could sympathize with the observation of a very celebrated sporting columnist one evening over the whisky at an open championship. 'You 're here to write about the golf,' he said, with envious candour. 'I 'm only here to get the dirt.' Next day his column 'revealed' a semi-fictitious rebellion by the professionals against not being admitted to the Royal and Ancient clubhouse.

We were lucky, too, by comparison with other sporting journalists, in the physical surroundings in which we did our work. Soon after the war I was set to write about one or two football matches. The first was at Portsmouth, where I was welcomed with cordial hospitality and left unsuspecting as to

what this line of life entailed. The other matches—I only had to do three or four, thank heaven—took place at London clubs with resounding names. At the interval the journalists were herded into little alcoves under the stands, no bigger than suburban henhouses, where those who could get in were munificently given a mug of tea by the management. From the way they were treated, they might have had some infectious disease. All of which, seeing that the newspapers they represented gave to these clubs, free of all cost, regular publicity which would have cost some thousands of pounds at advertising rates, seemed rather strange.

At one of these London clubs—West Ham, it was—I ran into an old friend of mine and at the interval saw him taking his cup of tea in the directors' room. I asked the man at the door if he would be so good as to let my friend know that I was there.

'You can't go in there,' said the man, recoiling in horror—he had, of course, a spiked moustache—'that 's the directors' room. The Press go down at the end there.'

I intimated that I had no desire to enter the holy of holies. I only wished that he should let my friend, who I could see was standing behind the door about eight feet away, know that I was there. But no, it could not be done. A red-faced man in a mackintosh came up, stating that he was a director. He confirmed the decision.

Then, again, there was a story I wanted to confirm before using it in a sports column. In the crazy football that bored every one to distraction at the beginning of the war there had taken place an incident at Watford that may well be the footballer's standard nightmare, just as missing the tiny putt for the open championship is the professional golfer's nightmare. Watford were playing Clapton Orient, it appeared, in a somewhat lethargical game before the usual handful of spectators. The ball swung out to the Watford wing. The outside-left trapped it neatly and made off with it up the touchline.

The crowd rose to their feet and let out the roar of the afternoon. Inspired by their enthusiasm, the winger ran faster and faster, and the faster he ran the more noise they made. At last he swung the ball into the middle, conscious of a job well done.

It was not until he saw one of Clapton Orient's forwards head it towards the net that he realized what all the noise had been about. *He had been running the wrong way!*

Here was just the sort of tale that appealed to me, and would

appeal to the war-time reader. I rang up the Watford club and was answered by a director. We could mind our blasted business, he said, and they would mind theirs. He knew the newspapers and their ways, telling lies and distorting things—and 'you 'll not get a word out of *me*.' I wondered what he would have said if we had left all further descriptions of Watford's matches out of the paper. He refused to give his name, which was lucky, for I might have printed it and been sued for libel.

I always used to think Tom Webster's drawings and excruciating personal descriptions of football directors were, like some of his other tales, inclined towards exaggeration. Not so.

Of course, there were other diversions, too. The coronation, for instance. I was one of a series of 'trained observers' with which my employers covered the route, in case any misguided gentleman should heave a bomb. Our instructions were to send nothing at all unless there was an 'incident.'

My own perch—I believe it cost ten guineas—was the most precarious contraption you could imagine. Just a plank balanced across two girders on the top of Grand Buildings, Trafalgar Square. I shared it with a number of others, mostly office boys who worked in the buildings, and therefore got in for nothing. The plank was not attached to the girders in any way. We sat with our feet dangling over the roofs, between which we could see the crowd like ants in the square below. The more the boys wriggled, the more parlous our position became; the plank jumped about on the girders, and several times I thought that its end would become disconnected altogether. My particular perch was at the far end, and by leaning over a few inches I looked directly down on the heads of the swarm below. Under my right elbow the minute hand of a vast clock—I should say it was twenty feet long—heaved its way spasmodically round, jerking nearly a foot at a time. Extraordinary how these things move when you get close to them.

Many's the time I have recounted a little human tragedy that was enacted on that plank midway through the morning. We had arrived there, according to instructions, at some ungodly hour like 6 a.m., most of the company bringing their own rations with them. One of the boys on the plank had brought an orange.

Every so many minutes he would produce this orange from his pocket and eye it fondly. He would inspect it from all angles and polish its skin till it glowed. It was the pride of his life, the orange of his eye. Often, as the hours passed, I thought he was

going to eat it, but always he managed to get it back into his pocket.

This went on from six in the morning almost until the procession was due to pass. I suppose he must have had this orange out of his pocket a dozen or fifteen times. Then at last came the Moment. The irrevocable decision was made, and the boy dug his thumb into the peel.

Casually he cast the pieces of peel down into the abyss below, peering over to watch them bounce merrily down among the rooftops and with luck fall through into the square. He was coming to the end of this operation when there was some sort of hullabaloo on the other side of the square, over by the National Gallery. It was a welcome distraction and at once claimed all attention, the boy's included.

Idly he went on peeling his orange. Suddenly there was a choked cry of anguish. I turned to see the boy clutching a small piece of peel in his hand. He had chucked away the orange and kept the peel!

'I *HATE* OLD ETONIANS!'

It behoves a man to write with wary discretion on the subject of his own lord and master. So let me start by saying of Lord Beaverbrook that he is the most forceful personality with whom I ever came into contact—an opinion common to nearly every man or woman who meets him.

This personality shines through the rather theatrical trappings that surround it. I am not in the least impressed by the dictaphones and the telephones and the corps of secretaries among whom Lord Beaverbrook moves and has his being. They are the prerogative of any rich man. But I am impressed—and impressed to the point of fidgeting and straightening my tie—by Lord B. himself. Any young man who says he is not is an insensitive lout or a liar.

His son, Max Aitken, D.F.C. (now performing prodigies of valour with the R.A.F.), and I were at Cambridge together. I first encountered the Beaverbrook spell when, many years ago, Max invited me to stay the week-end at Cherkeley. I forget the names of the company at dinner, but I recall being much awed

by their distinction. I had nothing to contribute to a conversation that included such lines as 'I told the Prime Minister . . .' or 'As I said to Mussolini at the time . . .'

My seclusion was suddenly shattered by the Beaverbrook barrage, a form of quick-firing interrogational inquisition familiar to all visitors to Cherkeley or Stornoway. So I played golf for Cambridge, did I? Why golf? How many matches did we play? How many a side? What else did I do? Economics? Why? What did I think of the university as an education? Why?

I knew the answers to all these questions, but I 'm hanged if I could think of them all at the time. While I fumbled for the answer to one question, out came the next. The inquisition lasted perhaps a minute and a half. At the end I felt as though I 'd done a good two hours' work.

Next morning Max and I were to play golf at Walton Heath. A dense fog swirled round the house, but later it began to lift. Buttonholing a man in a tail coat and brass buttons, I asked him if he would kindly inform Mr Max that the fog was lifting and that we could now play golf.

No, he would not, the man said. Mr Max was sleeping on the balcony through his lordship's bedroom, and it was more than his place was worth to go in if his lordship had not rung the bell. So I tried a man with rather more brass buttons, but he, too, declined with a shudder. Finally a kind of major-domo was found, willing to dare all on my behalf, and the deed was done.

This atmosphere of small boy and head master is not peculiar to servants. It pervades any household, office, or room containing the person of Lord Beaverbrook, and envelops the mighty alike with the humble, editors alike with office boys and golf correspondents.

It even pervades the offices of his newspapers in his absence—so much so that the only occasion on which I have seen the office boys galvanized into alertness was when it was rumoured that his lordship was in the building. These young hooligans, who do the Indian rope trick at the very whisper of a summons for their services, rushed round the office setting papers in order, sweeping the floor, and in general doing the equivalent of a year's work in half an hour.

Defending my profession, I am often stumped with the question: 'Should any single man be entrusted with the power

wielded by Beaverbrook?' I never know how to answer. That power, like it or not, is gigantic. The *Daily Express*, to take only one of his three newspapers, is read by anything from five to seven million persons every day. It is the source of their information, and therefore, though many would go to their graves denying it, of their opinions.

If the proprietor of a newspaper like this tells these good people categorically, every weekday for upwards of two years, that there will be no war in Europe this year or next year either, he is having a profound influence on the minds of the nation. It is a sobering thought that the opinions of five million persons may be swayed by the state of one man's liver. The system may not be perfect—but what can you produce that you are sure is better?

Soon after returning from Killarney for the first time I was summoned to dine at Cherkeley—an experience known to cause bolder spirits than I to sit bolt upright on the edge of their chairs. It is an experience, though, which has its exquisite moments. There is a unique satisfaction in watching his lordship snatch up the nearest dictaphone (unlikely to be more than three paces distant in any part of the house) and rasp out a succession of messages to managing directors, editors, secretaries, and the like. 'Mr. Robertson . . . Mr Christiansen . . . Mr Millar . . . I thought I asked you . . .' etc. The half-hour before dinner can be relied on to produce at least a dozen of these, and the savour of the soup is much enhanced by the thought that these messages are even now being flashed to the office to harry the parties concerned.

I had been summoned, I knew quite well, to give an account of Killarney, which Castlerosse had been insistently inviting our joint overlord to visit. Killarney, said I, was the loveliest place in all the world—if you liked that sort of thing.

'But,' I added, 'I don't think it would quite suit you, sir.'

'Oh, no? Why not?'

'Well, for one thing you don't get even the early Manchester edition till tea-time, and it takes an hour and a half to get through to London on the telephone.'

Next morning I was ushered into the holy of holies to say thank you and good-bye. I was temporarily disturbed to find his lordship pacing up and down, dictating to two male secretaries, stark naked except for a Panama hat.

'Ha! Larnghurrst—you didn't know I was a nudist, eh?'

'Er—no, I can't say I did,' said I, fingering the tie again and making a mental note that, properly embroidered, this would make a cracking good tale when I got home.

He expatiated on the virtues of sunbathing. As the sun moved across the heavens, so, it appeared, he moved round the house to work in the appropriate window . . . and looked very well on it, too.

The conversation went on fitfully. Then suddenly: 'You say it takes an hour and a half to get through to Killarney?'

'Well, er, generally, yes.'

He seized the nearest telephone. 'Get me Lord Castlerosse in Killarney.' A few hundred years ago he would have added, 'Or be fried in boiling oil!'

Two hours later I left. The call had not come through. It was not referred to again.

Beaverbrook, a millionaire at thirty after starting from scratch, has a bitter loathing of the Old School Tie. 'Yah! I *hate* Old Etonians!' he said to me that morning with incredible venom. If a man with the familiar light blue stripes on his tie had put his head round the corner at that moment, I think he 'd have torn him into small pieces.

The *Daily Express* often reflects this attitude—a common Fleet Street pose. The other day in one of its staccato leading articles it sneered:

'The public schools face hard times since the war began. Who weeps for them?

'Not the *Daily Express*.

'They are class institutions preserving class distinctions. If you send your son to one of them, you handicap him in his career. For in practically every profession except politics it is the boy who escapes the public school who gets to the top.'

His lordship laid upon his two sons the burden of a double handicap. He sent them to Westminster and Cambridge.

All the same I believe he *does* hate Old Etonians. And so very often do I.

To appoint this man Minister of Aircraft Production was a stroke of genius. What chance have the common run of politicians in dealing with a closely knit group of Big Shots—I won't say 'ring'—like the aircraft industry? A dinner party, a luncheon or two, assurances of co-operation, all pull together, shoulders to the wheel . . . and that 's the end of that.

The only man to do that sort of job is one who is an equally

Big Shot in his own right in a similar sphere. With his record of achievement in big business as represented in the cement and newspaper industries, Lord Beaverbrook was the ideal man.

People seemed to think it a move of almost unique inspiration when he sought out the best technical experts in the aircraft industry and gave them dictatorial powers in special branches of repairs and production. To find the best man at the job and then tell him to get on with it, an elementary principle of successful business, seemed to the 'passed-to-you' type of civil servant a staggeringly bold and original line.

Then he issued communiques in plain, though often semi-biblical, English; and that, too, was reckoned a most audacious innovation.

Sometimes, as any one connected with Express Newspapers could well appreciate, he expected the impossible. Said an aircraft manufacturer, whose name is a household word: 'There are some things which, by a superhuman effort, you can manage to get done. There are others which, no matter what effort, drive, initiative, toil, and trouble you put into them, are actually impossible. My only criticism of him is that he sometimes fails to distinguish between the two.'

PROHIBITION

It was in 1930 that, having ruled the fairways of the world for ten years, the American golfers reached the height of their glamour—when Bobby Jones made his famous grand slam by winning the amateur and open championships of the two countries in the same year. It was also the year in which I happened to attain the eminence of becoming captain of the Cambridge University golf team.

Though few of us had seen the Americans play, we talked in familiar terms of the golfing heroes of the day, as working girls talk of the current film idols, and our thoughts turned often to the gay, lavish, and proverbially hospitable land from which they came over each year to snatch our championships. Their country clubs, it was said, were more like the palaces of Indian princes. They had ballrooms and vast cocktail lounges and terraces and swimming pools ornamented by long-limbed,

bronzed young women. Subscriptions were sometimes a thousand dollars a year, and no one thought anything of it. They even watered the fairways.

Then someone had a bright idea—I should like to think it was myself, but I can't remember. Why should not a team representing Cambridge band themselves together and tour this magical land of plenty?

Time was short. Most of us were struggling to do a year's work in one term for our final exams, and there was little time for making all the complicated arrangements that such a project entails. However, in a week or two we managed to raise some money and buy ten return tickets to New York, and, through the kind offices of a Mr H. Jamieson Swarts, who bore the resounding title of Assistant Graduate Manager of Athletics at Pennsylvania University, to arrange a schedule of matches in the United States.

At last there assembled at Southampton, on board the *Caronia*, W. H. Bermingham, Eric Martin Smith (who later won the amateur championship), W. E. S. Bond, W. C. Carr, N. A. Keith, H. Martin Row, C. J. Hill, G. M. Turner, Billy Fiske, and myself.

When you 've seen one wave, you 've seen them all, as the man remarked: and one sea voyage is very much like the next. They are all, to me, unutterably dull. We passed the time playing poker and practising golf shots, to the astonishment of our fellow passengers, in the net which the purser kindly erected for us.

If any man tells you he is not thrilled by his first prospect of the New York skyline, you may tell him with confidence that he is a liar. A man leaning over the rail beside me summed it up in an ungrammatical nutshell:

'Looks just like you 'd think it 'd look like,' he said,'—only you never believed it could!'

I gazed at those astonishing pinnacles, so vast and so still in the evening sunlight, and thought with a thrill of the secrets they would soon unfold.

Were the Americans indeed the most hospitable nation on earth? Was this reputation for slickness and efficiency a myth? Were they really so much smarter and more 'go-ahead' than the laggardly British?

In the United States of 1930 that most tragic of human experiments, Prohibition, was at its crazy height. Was all American liquor rot-gut? Was half the nation already blind from the

effects of illicit wood-alcohol? Did the roar of the sawn-off shot-gun habitually drown conversation in the streets?

We had been presented, as we left Waterloo, with a big woolly mascot. A vast customs official eyed it suspiciously and prodded it. 'Got liquor in it?' he demanded. Everything was suspect—and not unreasonably when you consider that for years the New York Corporation barges, which take out the city's rubbish and dump it in the sea, had been returning laden to the brim with bootleg liquor.

We repaired to an immense hotel near to the Pennsylvania station. Our forty pieces of baggage, we had been told, had better come along on a truck. It would be cheaper that way than taking a lot of taxis.

The truck took two hours and cost eight pounds in English money. A few weeks later I should have known better than to say 'Thanks for the suggestion.' The correct reply was: 'Who the hell wants a truck? What 'll it cost? And what are you getting out of this, anyway?' I should then have spat upon the ground. After that, we should have understood each other.

The New York taxi driver, for sheer dangerous and discourteous driving, had the Parisian beaten to a standstill. The rule of the road had been reduced by these fellows to a simple formula. You rushed furiously at the other man, and the one who had the courage to put his brakes on last went across first. Winner and loser each hurled the wildest abuse.

They would wait in a line behind a red traffic light. The moment the light turned green, the man at the head of the procession darted over the crossing to harry the tail of the last man across in the other direction. Meanwhile the gentlemen behind pressed permanently on their hooters, leaning out of their cabs and yelling at the man in front to get a move on. The din was terrific.

My driver's name was Aaron Novak, and, little suspecting the significance of the words, I had told him to hurry. His speciality was threading his way at top speed from one line of traffic to another by weaving in and out of the steel columns that support New York's overhead railway. Give me the 'Wall of Death' any day.

I approached the hotel clerk in order to register for the party. The following conversation ensued.

'What 's ya name?' The man was chewing ostensibly.

'Longhurst.'

'Lornghoist?'

'No. Longhurst.'

'*Yeah, Lornghoist. That 's what I said.*'

I registered and we were whisked to the sixteenth floor, approximately one-third of the way up the building. We succumbed to a temptation I have since discovered to be common to nearly all English people ascending a skyscraper for the first time, and spat out of the window. It never reached the ground.

The next five weeks we spent in a hectic stampede from one golf club to another, in Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, in a temperature that rarely dropped below a hundred in the shade. As an item of education, at the age of twenty-one, those five weeks were worth another two years at the university.

'Whatever you do, be careful of the liquor,' they told us before we left. 'They can stand it because they are used to it, but you can't.' I must have had that advice dinned into me six dozen times before we boarded the boat at Southampton. So far as one could tell from the films and the newspapers, the advice was good.

We approached our first alcoholic beverage with extreme caution. We had played our first match, at a club which shall be nameless, and had retired to the locker-room, where in those days the golfers of the United States had to keep their liquor.

'Now,' said our host, 'I guess you boys would like a little drink?' The heat was stifling and Bermingham and I signified that we should. Our host produced a bottle of gin, with an unrecognizable label, and poured out a measure large enough to give the average English publican a heart attack. Lemon, soda, and ice were added, and the mixture pronounced to be a John Collins.

The popular English theory with regard to American liquor was that of the 'delayed action.' That 's where you had to be so careful, the pundits said. It tasted all right at the time, but half an hour later you wouldn't know what had hit you. . . . So when I tasted my drink and found it to be, so far as I could tell, a perfectly orthodox John Collins, I still proceeded with caution.

I drank it, and with some misgivings accepted another. The two of them had on my partner and myself exactly the effect produced by two such drinks in this country: in other words, they quenched our thirst. Our hosts, on the other hand, had become decidedly talkative. They poured out a third.

We drank it—and our hosts were gloriously intoxicated.

Bermingham and I looked at each other with a certain amount of apprehension. When would the blow fall? After all, if these fellows who drank the stuff every day . . . But the blow never fell.

And so it went on at club after club. Our hosts extended to us that warm-hearted, sincere hospitality for which Americans are justly renowned, but always they succumbed to their own liberality. They were always tight by the time that we, mere undergraduates, were just running into form.

The attitude of America at that time towards alcoholic refreshment was that of a child towards a forbidden toy. Men—and girls—made dates to meet each other for the avowed purpose simply of getting drunk together. The one who 'passed out' first was reckoned to have had the best party. It was all rather pathetic.

One club gave us a magnificent dinner party, attended by a hundred and fifty people. At four in the morning I was having bacon and eggs in the restaurant when an elegant young woman at the next table, whose behaviour had been beyond reproach, slid suddenly from her chair and fell unconscious to the floor.

Her escort picked her up and without a word carried her from the room and dumped her in his car outside. He then returned and got on with his bacon and eggs. I asked the club manager whether, as a matter of interest, he ought not to send for a doctor or something. 'Aw, hell,' he said. 'She 's just had too much. She 'll be O.K. in the morning.' This, then, must be the knockout drop, for the girl had been perfectly *compos mentis* a moment before she passed away.

Every one boasted that *their* liquor was the real thing. Swarthy little men with names ending in *i* and *o* and *itz* and *ein* assured them that it had come straight from Scotland, and they drank down the lies and the liquor all in one gulp. I stayed with another member of the team in a lovely private house outside New York. Said our host after dinner: 'I 've got something very special for you boys. A bottle of real old vintage port. Something to remind you of home.'

The bottle, suitably dusty, was opened with much ceremony—and remind us of home it certainly did. To me it called to mind the port that stout ladies add to their Guinness in pubs in the Tottenham Court Road. It was pale in colour, not unlike *vin rose*, and pallid in taste. If I had been asked to identify it, I should have said that it tasted as much like port as anything. I suppose I had half a dozen small glasses.

Next morning the sun shone in at the bedroom window and I made as if to get out of bed. I was unable to rise from the pillow. No power on earth could have shifted me. In acute embarrassment I summoned my charming hostess and confessed. She was neither shocked, dismayed, nor even mildly surprised. She brought me a disgusting concoction and at twelve I was able to rise.

The same host took me to lunch at what must surely be one of the most remarkable clubs in the world. Its name was the Cloud Club and its premises the seventy-first and seventy-second stories of the Chrysler building !

New York in 1930 was pure babel in comparison with the New York of to-day. Its self-confidence severely shaken by the slump of 1929, it seemed to be rushing in all directions and making a great display of superficial slickness, speed, and efficiency to impress itself that all was well after all. Everything was bigger, or better, or faster, or had cost more, than the corresponding article elsewhere. In their efforts to do things faster than they had ever been done before, people tripped over their own feet and had to go back and do them again.

We were standing, for instance, the ten of us, on the little station of Convent, New Jersey, on our way back to the city. Ten persons, ten suitcases, ten bags of golf clubs. When the train arrived, we formed a chain and flung in the luggage as fast as we could. We were the only persons on the station. When half the luggage was in, the guard blew his whistle and the train moved out.

At least ten minutes were lost while the communication cord was pulled and the train recalled.

We arrived in New York and engaged three immense negro porters to get the luggage out. Before they could do so, the train backed out. Once again, in a babel of whistling and shouting and cursing, it had to be recalled.

We proceeded at top speed to the ferry. Unable to wait for an extra half minute, it was just steaming out into the river.

It was the era of those fantastic endurance records that made the United States for a while the laughing-stock of other nations. Men were pushing peanuts up mountains with their noses, and squatting on flag poles, and sitting in trees. A man named 'Shipwreck Kelly,' I remember, had been sitting on top of a pole in Atlantic City for God knows how long, coining money from suckers who paid a florin a time just to gaze at him.

Gangsters were still public heroes in those days. Not until many years later did the Hays office clamp down a censorship compelling Hollywood to give gangsters an unhappy ending on the screen. The day after we arrived, a very Big Shot operating in Camden, not far from where we were staying, was informed by the opposition that he had twenty-four hours to live. He wondered, not unnaturally, where he should have his dinner that evening. If he went home, they 'd put a bomb, or, to be more technical, a 'pineapple,' through his window. The safest place, he concluded, was in the most public restaurant in the place.

As he came out of the restaurant, a black sedan motor car passed slowly along the kerb. The rattle of a machine-gun, and the Big Shot was no more. They picked forty bullets out of him.

That didn't impress me unduly. After all, one had seen it a dozen times on the screen. Small boys in any English town could re-enact the scene. What did impress me was the newspaper description of the event. At the end of a five-column obituary of the deceased, in not unflattering terms, it said:

'*A bystander was also killed.*'

No. To the stranger the United States of that time was not an impressive country. Isolated instances of the bill being wrong can be passed off with mild expressions of protest. But when the bill is *always* wrong—wrong so inevitably that one sends it back for re-addition before even glancing at the total—then life can be extremely tiresome.

Moreover, the bill in New York could be relied on to be wrong in each of three ways. It contained the wrong items; these items were incorrectly charged for; and the total of the wrong charges for the wrong items was then itself wrong.

It took me a day or two to learn the technique, which was very simple. The secret was contained in three words: 'Fetch the manager.' After the appropriate amount of bluffing and blustering the two sides understood each other and parted, generally, the best of friends. The formula never failed—except once.

It was our last night in New York, and for myself I saw no prospect of another in the next quarter-century. A member of the team and I toured the town together, and as we left the last place of entertainment a touting taxi-man sidled up, Parisian

fashion, to whisper in our ear that he knew a little joint where the liquor was good, etc. . . .

We walked on. It then occurred to me that as it was our last night, perhaps we should cram in every experience we could find. It all added to the store of memories which make up the background to a man's life. My companion would have none of this insidious suggestion, so I went back alone.

I can say with honesty that I was at least as interested to see if I should prove wary enough not to be swindled—and to note any new methods by which they might endeavour to 'do' me—as I was in the joint and its liquor. I hoped by this time to be a match for them.

Having bargained in advance regarding the taxi fare, an elementary precaution this, to avoid being taken a five-mile route to cover a couple of blocks, I arrived at a small doorway labelled (shades of Paris!) 'The Sphinx.' It was in a decrepit and thoroughly sinister neighbourhood, somewhere down on Second Avenue, I believe. The entrance was a flight of stairs leading up between two shops. It was barred by a rough character in some sort of uniform.

The taxi man whispered my credentials as a genuine sucker-tourist, making sure that his name was noted for the commission he would later draw on my bill, and the rough character at the door yelled over his shoulder: 'Poity comin' up.'

Buttoning the hip pocket, the 'poity' with no great confidence ascended the stairs.

It was a bare room with tables round the wall, and a band at one end and a bar at the other. I sat down at a table and was joined at once by a blousy, middle-aged blonde harlot. I told her in unmistakable terms that I desired nothing of her, least of all her presence.

I moved away to a neighbouring table. She followed. She declined to move. The waiter arrived and she ordered a gin and something. I intimated to the waiter that in no circumstances need he look to me to pay for it. And what would I have? I would have a Canada Dry, which is a brand of ginger ale.

'Gin and ginger ale?' said the waiter.

'No. Canada Dry.'

'Gin and Canada Dry?'

'No. Canada Dry.'

'Oh, Canada Dry.'

I felt I had won this round.

The lady received her drink and tossed it back without a breather. Almost before she had done so, the man had brought another. She had about four in quick succession. I asked her in what I hoped to be a tough and sophisticated manner why she troubled to drink so much coloured water when I wasn't going to pay the bill, anyway.

'Hey, waiter,' said the old trollop, 'gen'leman doesn't think there 's any gin in this.'

He brought another, which I tasted. It was neat fire-water. The old girl coughed and spluttered as she tried to swallow it.

The waiter appeared again.

'Just how far do you want your check to go?' he said.

'What is it now?'

'Twenty-two dollars fifty.'

About four pounds fifteen, at current rates.

Out came the old formula. 'Fetch the manager,' said I, waving the man airily away. I was still confident, but the waiter's reply was a severe body blow.

'There is no manager,' he said.

' Come, come,' said I, rallying. 'There must be someone in charge of this place. Send him along, whoever he is.'

The man stuck to his guns. Each waiter looked after his own checks, he said. My bill was twenty-two fifty—seven drinks for the lady at three dollars (or twelve shillings) each and a Canada Dry at one fifty for myself—and what about it?

I was putting the man straight about this when I became aware of curious movements in other parts of the room. Others, it appeared, were anxious to join in the discussion. They were for the most part dark, swarthy gentlemen who had been sitting at tables round the wall. None had coats or ties: all were chewing cigar stubs: none had shaved that day. They slouched nonchalantly but with infinite menace from every side. I gathered they took a poor view of parties who robbed defenceless waiters by not paying their bills.

Luckily I had the money on me—plus exactly one dollar for the cab back to civilization.

Well, that is the uncomplimentary side of the picture. On the other side we accumulated memories that all of us will treasure to the end of our days—memories, in particular, of the unbounded hospitality of our hosts in the twenty odd golf clubs against whom we played matches. It is the sort of debt you

can't repay by the writing of bread-and-butter letters, or even by belated references of gratitude like this.

The second match of our tour was at Pine Valley. We played the club team and lost—we found it took ten days to get rid of the sea legs that people are always talking about—and we had a match against Pennsylvania University washed out by a terrific thunderstorm.

We did not conceal our astonishment. Next day we read in the *Philadelphia Herald*: ' "I never saw such beastly weather," explained one gallant Englishman, "why, 'pon my word, old chap, it just seemed as though you had fallen into a tank of water." '

I suppose I shall never come nearer to losing my life than I did at Pine Valley. Piercing the forest from which the course is carved is the main railway line between Philadelphia and Atlantic City. It is a long straight stretch and the big expresses roar through at eighty or ninety miles an hour, hooting with that peculiar sound known so well to film-goers and ringing their bell to warn persons approaching the unfenced crossing on the little track leading up to the Pine Valley club.

I was being driven into the city by a Philadelphia newspaper man. We halted to let a train roar by, watching it with that puny feeling of insignificance you get from seeing a mighty express thunder past the bonnet of your motor car. It went screeching away into the distance, leaving a trail of thick black smoke. I mentally thanked Providence that my friend had heard it coming, and we advanced gingerly across the rails.

We had crossed one and were about to cross the other when the din, instead of decreasing, got suddenly louder. From the pall of smoke set up by the first train there dashed another going in the opposite direction. I suppose it missed us by about six feet. I know we were so near that we could not even see the windows of the carriages, only the wheels.

As we drove into the city I enlarged to my newspaper friend on the wonders of Pine Valley. He started his piece next day with a fine burst of journalese: ' "A truly wonderful golf course and one which is fully entitled to the praise which critics both here and abroad have so lavishly conferred upon it." In these words did Captain Henry C. Longhurst, the interesting young Englishman . . .' I was grateful anyway for the 'interesting.'

When I look back on the cuttings describing our progress I think sometimes that I and my fellow golfing journalists could

do with a little more colour. When, a few years back, a team of golfers from Yale toured this country, we described them with unimaginative accuracy as 'the Yale University team who are touring Great Britain.' But here are some of the Americans' descriptions of ourselves:

> *The invading British collegiate linksmen.*
> *The visitors from across the briny deep.*
> *Famed stars from dear old England.*
> *The personable youngsters from Johnny Bull's domain.*

Recording that we were to play a match against Harvard, another scribe wrote that we were to 'cross niblicks with the Crimson sod-choppers up Boston way.'

They took us into Philadelphia one evening to a dinner of welcome to that great American, Admiral Richard Byrd, the Polar explorer. Twelve hundred people were there and the mayor presented the admiral with some silver plate to mark his safe return from his latest feat of conquest. The admiral, said the mayor, might receive many handsome presentations in his welcome from cities all over the United States, but he felt sure that none would have cost so much as Philadelphia's.

The evening was memorable for a sight, and sound, that I 'll warrant no reader of this book has experienced—that of twelve women harpists in action. Attired in classical robes, they mounted the stage at the end of the banqueting hall and sat themselves down beside twelve gigantic golden harps.

There were only two pieces of music in the world, said the master of ceremonies, written specially for twelve women harpists, and they would play them both. Would we please accord them silence and not rattle our knives and forks?

The diners gave a friendly cheer and set about getting on with their dinner. The women plucked furiously at their harps, but they 'd no chance against the clatter of a thousand plates and the continuous cries of 'Waiter!' They finished their piece and swept angrily from the stage. They declined to continue till the master of ceremonies had made a second appeal to the company to give them a hearing.

This had, if anything, less effect than the first, and again the women swept angrily out. Still, I felt, life is the richer from having seen, if not heard, twelve women harpists. There ought, surely, to be a noun of assembly for so remarkable a body, as

in a 'muster' of peacocks, a 'congregation' of plovers, a 'murmuration' of starlings, and so on. A 'sweep' of women harpists, perhaps, or a 'plucking.'

After five days we departed to play the big match of the tour against the Crimson sod-choppers up Boston way, and here I must say we were rather unfortunate. We had no time to become familiar with the Belmont Springs course and we had still to throw off these 'sea legs.' We were beaten by 8 matches to 3½—and we lost no fewer than seven matches on the last green. I believe if we had played them a fortnight later we should have won—which would have been no mean achievement.

From Boston we played a number of clubs, including the Country Club at Brookline, where Francis Ouimet won the open championship of the United States as a boy of nineteen in that historic replay with Harry Vardon and Ted Ray. I played Francis in our match there and was highly delighted to take the great man to the last green.

We went to Myopia, with its lovely old clubhouse that was built in 1742, and stands to-day exactly as it stood in the Civil War. They offered us, I remember, nine different kinds of liqueur, all of them genuine.

And in contrast, returning to New York, we went down to the Lido, where Mr A. C. Gregson, editor of the American *Golf Illustrated*, took us under his wing. The Lido of those days—it was much subdued when I returned six years later—might have come straight from the pages of a rather exotic edition of the *Arabian Nights*.

To reach it you crossed a derelict plain broken only by wooden huts and the inevitable peanut and chewing-gum hoardings. At last there appeared a single gigantic building with towers like minarets. This was the Lido hotel. Here at its maddest was the crazy magnificence of those times. Thick-piled carpets underfoot, lackeys on every side, a pervading perfume as of incense. Two ballrooms, two swimming pools, and a quarter-mile 'broad walk' alongside the ocean beach. The whole thing painted a bright orange-yellow.

We played in the Metropolitan open championship at the Fairview Country Club outside New York, and were no little awed to find ourselves playing among all the golfing heroes we had worshipped from the other side. I was down to partner a character by the name of Wild Bill Melhorn, who in those days was somewhere near the top flight. We had never met, but he

gave notice that he was not going to play with any god-darned English student, so we were separated. If Wild Bill had been rather less wild and tough, and if I had been a trifle larger, I 'd have had a row with him. As it was, I had to fall back on what I hoped would be taken for the traditional cold indifference of the English gentleman. I was gratified to see that Wild Bill did very poorly in the tournament. So, for that matter, did the rest of us.

Our golfing record, though, was by no means bad. Out of fourteen matches we won nine and lost five, and I think that on the whole we left a reasonably good impression, which was the main thing. After five happy, hot, and hectic weeks we reboarded the good ship *Caronia* and set sail for England, each with a rich store of memories to cherish for a lifetime.

G.R.A. 1

I HAD a letter one morning at Cambridge asking me if I would do the writer the honour of arranging a golf match between the University team, of which I was captain at the time, and Coombe Hill. It was signed 'Ashfield.'

I was much impressed, and still should be, at getting a letter from London's transport dictator, couched in such humble terms; and I hastened to arrange a Sunday fixture with Coombe Hill. I found Lord Ashfield a quiet, white-haired, unobtrusive man; and the way he treated myself and the rest of the team of undergraduates helped to settle in me the unshakable conviction that the really big man finds time to be polite to every one.

When I saw that I was down to play Brigadier-General (now Air Commodore) A. C. Critchley in the singles, I imagined a portly, white-moustached 'Blimp.' There appeared instead a robust, athletic-looking man of around forty, rather thin on top, taking savage practice swings at the daisies and chewing gum as though his life hung on it. His golf was of the vigorous variety, and he obviously took it with much seriousness. We came to the last green all square and I holed a putt of perhaps four yards to beat him.

Looking back on that match when I had come to know him well, I felt that Critch had probably been rather impressed by a mere undergraduate daring to hole a longish sloping putt to beat him on the last green. At any rate, it formed the basis of a friendship I wouldn't have missed for worlds.

Critch is a man on whom no one has neutral views. People like or dislike him intensely, irrespective of whether they know him. An acquaintance of mine once put it in a nutshell. 'The trouble with being a friend of Critch's,' he said, 'is that you have to spend your whole time defending him against people who 've never met him!'

I suppose every 'successful' man has this kind of enemy. The English are happy enough to help a lame dog over a stile, but they don't like to see him run too far ahead of them. Critch, who in any case got over the stile for himself, has run much too far and too quickly ahead for the liking of a good many people —and in the process has trodden on the toes of some who stood jittering by the way.

He has a forthright way with him that is inclined to shock the conventional Englishman. If he thinks a man is a damned fool, he finds it difficult to conceal the fact—a trait that I personally find attractive. His fellow Canadian, Lord Beaverbrook, is very much the same.

Critch is a past master in the art of publicity. 'Who is this feller, anyway?' growl the Blimps of the Pall Mall clubs. 'Always gettin' his name in the papers.' But Critch, unlike the folk who pose so 'unwillingly ' for their photograph, at the same time ordering three dozen copies of the paper in which it is to appear, admits that publicity is the life-blood of the vast public entertainment organizations with which he is connected, like the Greyhound Racing Association, the White City stadium, and Harringay arena.

But when, on the outbreak of war, his rank changed to Air Commodore and he became responsible for the initial training of pilots, navigators, wireless-operators, gunners—in fact, of nearly all the thousands entering the Royal Air Force in an 'operational' capacity—he showed that his judgment of publicity was equally comprehensive in reverse. For three years his name scarcely appeared in a newspaper.

His organisation of initial training wings was copied, lock, stock and barrel, by the United States and to a great extent by Germany too. When one of his wings in the heart of London raised, in their

spare time, several hundred pigs and, in one year, 12,000 pounds of tomatoes, 12,000 lettuces, and 1,500 cucumbers, and the newspapers published pictures of the King inspecting the products of this remarkable enterprise, Critch saw to it that his name did not even appear in the captions.

How much the handle to his name has been worth to him, how far he would have got as plain Mr Arthur Cecil Critchley, is not easy to estimate. In my own opinion his material success would have been at least as great, but its achievement more difficult. The word 'general' is a key that fits a surprising number of doors.

In his day Critch has been a fine all-round athlete—polo for Canada, in the first flight at boxing, lawn tennis, and so on—but in the years before the war his name was associated with golf. I think the game intrigued him largely because of the personal, individual challenge it offers to the player. It pricked his vanity. He had conquered other games, he could certainly master hockey at the halt. I conceive his early approach to the game to have resembled that of P. G. Wodehouse's immortal character, Vincent Jupp, who said to his secretary, 'Take dictation. . . . May the fifth, take up golf. . . . September twelfth, win amateur championship. . . .'

Critch launched a similarly violent blitzkrieg on the game of golf. To overcome it before its defences could be equipped for the assault, he supported the attack with every weapon at his command. He got professionals out of bed in the early morning to give him lessons before he left for the office; he attached a caddie permanently to his staff; he spent every available spare moment in practising.

His approach to the game was, and still is, more typically American—or maybe Canadian?—than English. The English temperament is to try pretty hard but never, never to admit to the world that you are trying. Ever present in the back of the Englishman's mind is the old, old alibi—'After all, it 's only a game.' Critch has no such inhibitions. 'I 'm trying like hell and I don't care who knows it,' he 'll snort. ' If you don't care to try as hard, that 's nothing to do with me. I shall take your money, that 's all.' And take their money he certainly did, until the war left no one any time to play or any money to play for. The year before the war he won nearly a thousand pounds in clubs selling-sweeps alone, off a handicap of scratch or plus one.

Not that he was always successful. When, on an occasion I have described elsewhere, the bookmakers put up four hundred pounds in less than two minutes to back their man, Elliot Gibbs, against him, he was trimmed, on a freakish, frostbound course, by twelve and eleven. All the same, having once or twice played with him when the stakes ran into three figures, I record that I 'd as soon have Critch as my partner, for big money, as any man I know.

Technically, the bold brigadier is not a great golfer. He started comparatively late in life and his swing has an artificial air. It lacks the natural rhythm acquired, and never quite lost, by the man who starts as a boy. But temperamentally—and what a 'but' that is in golf—Critch is a lion. The fact that opponents may be better players of golf shots means less than nothing to him. They 're only human. So he hangs on to them and harries them and worries them until at last they 'blow up.' They get on the run, and the little voice whispering 'After all, it 's only a game' completes their destruction. Mentally kicking themselves as they hang mournfully over the clubhouse bar, they can't understand how he came to beat them.

Match play is Critch's strong point. His combative, dynamic nature responds to the personal challenge of a scrap with a flesh-and-blood adversary. His is a mentality that draws no inspiration from the cold challenge of a card and pencil. I 'd never back him to win a stroke play championship.

But in the few years in which he played golf seriously he won the match play championships of France, Belgium, Holland, and Surrey, often against fields including anything up to a dozen golfers who would rank above him in the book of form.

'He does it for publicity,' said the critics. Nonsense. If you think that any man in the forties can just walk out and win national golf titles because his name in the papers might do his business some good, well—go out and try it. Things don't work out that way.

On the other hand, his successes at golf brought to his business enterprises publicity that could not have been bought for thousands of pounds—and the first man to acknowledge the fact was Critch. 'One championship is worth more than a month of paid advertisements,' he naïvely observed. Any one who knows the newspaper world will confirm that.

Publicity frankly inspired the months of manœuvres—it wouldn't be fair to reveal the details—by which he secured the

first few numbers of the new motor registration letters GRA and distributed them among the big shots of the Greyhound Racing Association. As managing director he appropriated GRA 1 for his Rolls-Royce. Frank Gentle, his shrewd, quietly humorous 'other half' in the organization, whose contrasting personality helps to make them such a formidable pair in business, had GRA 2.

'Brab,' in other words Lieut.-Col. J. T. C. Moore-Brabazon, M.P., I believe, had GRA 3; but recent pictures in the illustrated weeklies show him nowadays to have gone one better. Holder of the first pilot's certificate ever issued in England, Brab has his car labelled FLY 1.

Some years ago Critch married the admirable Miss Diana Fishwick. I say admirable because when, at the age of nineteen, Miss Fishwick reached the final of the women's golf championship, this was the only British title not yet won by the Americans, and her opponent was Miss Glenna Collett, the Helen Wills of American golf. Our last line of defence being an inexperienced girl playing in her first national tournament, it became apparent that the citadel must fall.

Diana beat the lady by four and three and became overnight the heroine of the day, showered with a flood of sentimental publicity calculated, while reducing the average male to nausea, to turn the head of almost any nineteen-year-old girl you like to name. Having a photogenic countenance, a nice figure, and a free and easy disposition, she found her picture at regular intervals in the newspapers and the shiny shilling weeklies. She was socially lionized—or should it be lioness-ized?—and her whole life was one calculated to make a young girl insufferable.

She survived the experience gracefully and unscathed. A few years later she caused a rare sensation by not entering for the women's golf championship. 'Why ever aren't you playing?' cried the chorus. To which she gave the unchallengeable and wholly admirable reply: 'Because I don't want to.' She had won it once, in fact by this time she had won pretty well all the game had to offer, and she was tired of the mental and physical racket entailed by modern sport. Unlike the others, she had the courage to quit.

Critch introduces an almost military discipline and precision into his business, coupled with shrewd touches of showmanship—which again is disturbing to the minds of the easy-going English.

Take a look at the startlingly efficient organization of the White City and you see his hand at every turn—the clockwork routine, the perfect timing, the blowing of bugles, the trainers in their white coats marching in step round the arena, even the white-uniformed man who follows with the dustpan and shovel, looking like something out of a Ruritanian musical comedy.

Of all the charges his enemies might care to level against him lack of generosity is certainly not one. To me he has, unlike so many rich men, the only true valuation of money—namely, that its usefulness is to be measured only in terms of the happiness it brings, and that to be enjoyed to the full that happiness must be shared with friends. From greyhound racing and other interests he has made, as he freely admits, a fantastic amount of money. He has spent on a corresponding scale—but rarely alone. He made an illuminating remark on the subject when we were driving in from Le Bourget after flying to Paris one evening.

'Some people are born hosts,' he said, 'and others are born guests. It 's not just a question of money. It 's a question of how you are made. I 'm one of the hosts. The unhappiest week-end I remember spending for years was at a country house filled with some of the most entertaining people in England, including the Prime Minister. I hated every minute of it. You had to have breakfast when you were told and play tennis when you were told and have dinner when you were told. But if I 'd had the same company in my own house, I should have loved it.'

All of which seems to me a reasonable philosophy, more especially as I happen to have been one of his more frequent guests.

THE OLD SCHOOL TIE

I AM a wearer of the Old School Tie. Metaphorically, that is, for any one found wearing the emblem of one of our older foundations in Fleet Street is liable to be lynched, and I do not choose to risk such a death for the Alma Mater.

I suppose no class of person thinks on any subject quite so

irresponsibly as does the average journalist on the subject of the old school tie. I have seen men of usually sober judgment ablaze with resentment at a fellow-being for no other reason than that his father sent him to school. On two occasions I have been openly insulted in the Press Club on the grounds that I was sent to a university.

The fellow who goes into Fleet Street branded with the old school tie catches it both ways. If he adopts a 'hail-fellow-well-met' attitude, he is an over-confident young so-and-so: if he keeps himself at a respectful distance, he is being snooty and exclusive, 'just because he went to school.' Life is at first very difficult, and it may be years before he is accepted as a genuine journalist. I 've been eight years at it and some of them still regard me with suspicion. Yet in fact I have never worn my old school tie . . . for the good and sufficient reason that I haven't got one.

I class public schools with blood sports, the licensing laws, and corporal punishment; in other words, as subjects on which the Englishman is not to be trusted to think straight. If he has 'been to school,' it has probably sheltered him from knowing the class of cad who hasn't. And if he 's the class of cad who hasn't, he spends the rest of his days holding forth about the iniquities of the public school system.

I believe I am in a better position to argue the point than most, for my father, one of the provincial trading folk who are the backbone of England, did not 'go to school'—and I did. I saw both sides of the picture.

Public schools, however solid and enduring their external reputation, suffer internally from periodic bad patches. I rate the Charterhouse of my own time, the early twenties, as an outstandingly good school. It wasn't a good school because I went there. Nor did I go there because it was a good school. I went there because by the grace of God and a coach who knew his business I got a classical scholarship worth seventy-six pounds ten shillings a year.

Some years before this Charterhouse had been in the doldrums. What it became after losing my refining influence I am not in a position to judge. I just struck lucky in catching Mr (now Sir) Frank Fletcher in his prime as head master. The school itself seemed to be a happy mean between the calculated snobbishness instilled into (or never eradicated from) young Etonians and the ersatz respectability of some of the minor public schools.

One of my three best friends, by the way, is an Old Etonian,

Driving around Cambridge one day in his car, he observed: 'Only ——s ride bicycles!' This outrageous utterance would not be worth recalling had it been made in jest or put forward as controversial bait. But he was perfectly serious about it. Five years at Eton had sent him out into the world believing that in fact only ——s did ride bicycles.

A fair criticism of our three main foundations, Eton, Harrow, and Winchester, is that they tend to brand their products. Give me five minutes' conversation with an Etonian, a Harrovian, and a Wykehamist, minus their ties, and I will bet you a hundred pounds to a dollar I can tell you which is which.

The social and material advantages of having been sent to a public school by one's father are in England so enormous that I hardly blame the critics if their judgment is warped by emotion. All the same, those advantages are indisputable and the leader writer who wrote so bitterly: 'The public schools suffer hard times. . . Who weeps for them? Not the *Daily Express*. . . .' was on the wrong tack. He 'd have done better to write: 'These advantages should be given alike to rich and poor. . . .'

Whether the public schools provide the best form of teaching is a different matter. I think it could be vastly and simply improved. Principally by recognizing that ninety-five per cent. of the public schoolboys of to-day have to go out and earn their own living, and by making some effort to equip them to do so.

For instance, in thirteen years of the best education that my father's money could buy, no one uttered a single syllable to me concerning the art of Working. I learnt a thousand times as much of the art of concentration, of the application of the mind to the task in hand to the exclusion of extraneous influences, from the game of golf as I did from the whole series of professional teachers.

No one dinned into me ten times a day, as they ought to have done, that the value of pegging away day after day at Thucydides' interminable Peloponnesian War was not in learning the events of that dim distant era but in training my mind for the purpose of making a cash income in the future. Yes, I know it 's obvious enough to the adult, but it is not obvious and never will be obvious to a boy. I have had to earn every penny I have made in this life directly from my mind. Couldn't someone have warned me of this in advance?

Again, if there 's one thing the English public school teaches you, ineradicably and for ever, it is 'Never put off till to-morrow what you can put off till the day after to-morrow.' If the stuff has to be shown up at early school in the morning, don't do it this afternoon, when you 've plenty of time, or during the regulation period this evening. Stay up far into the prohibited hours of the night, or, better still, get up at crack of dawn to-morrow and do it then.

When, every Monday for six years, I wrote a piece in the *Evening Standard*, I never once completed it until the position had become desperate. Frequently it would be composed in the early hours of Monday morning under the kindly eye of the Countess of Craven (*née* Miss Irene Meyrick) at the 'Slippin.'

The trouble is that the mind of the average public schoolmaster is completely insulated from the shocks and currents of everyday life in the world outside. Life to him is not a battle of wits in sharp company: it is like a dreamy voyage in a backwater. So long as he commits no grievous error, his job is safe, and by easy regular stages he will rise to the eminence of being a housemaster. And he will still be a housemaster fifteen years after his faculties have begun to wane.

Every schoolboy can recall this type of ineffective, often lovable, character, unconsciously sowing the seeds of idleness and evasion in a whole generation of youthful minds. Certainly we had them at Charterhouse. One man I recall in particular—amiable, upright, scholarly, and completely removed, those twenty years or more, from the life for which he was preparing his pupils.

It was this man's practice to have his form line up in successive rows of three or four in front of his high desk to recite the Latin and Greek repetition they were meant to have learnt overnight. For years the tradition was handed on in this form that the first boy pinned a copy of the repetition on the front of the master's desk, the rest read their lines from it, and the last boy in the last row snatched it down and threw it into the man's own wastepaper basket under his nose.

On one occasion a boy smoked a complete cigarette in this master's form-room during school hours. Another boy came in for extra school at three, and was gone, via the window, at three five.

This man it was, too, who for sheer pedantry capped the classically typical utterance of the head master in *Young Woodley*, when he burst into Woodley's study and discovered him in the act of assaulting another boy with a carving knife. Instead of saying: 'Good heavens, boy, put that knife down at once,' or

something of similarly reasonable character, the head master, if you remember, said: 'And pray, Woodley, what is the significance of that knife?'

The circumstances of my old friend's remark at Charterhouse were not so dramatic. He was presiding at lunch in his own house when he was hit on the head with a bread pellet inaccurately thrown by a new boy. Instead of saying to one of the senior boys at his table: 'Go and find out who threw that, and bring him here,' he uttered the memorable words: '*I appear to be the recipient of a missile!*'

Another master was retained for a whole decade after his absent-mindedness had become a byword. He it was who, welcoming an Old Carthusian back to the school, said: 'Let me see, now. Was it you or your brother who was killed in the war?' He it was, too, who told the O.T.C. that if they did not smarten up they would have to 'mark time all the way to Puttenham.' I was myself in his form when, having said: 'Get out your pencils and paper and take a dictation,' he gazed out of the window for some minutes, turned round, and said: 'Now we 'll correct what we 've done.'

Not all the masters, of course, were of this amiable incompetence. Mr Humphrey Grose Hodge, for instance, now headmaster of Bedford School, whom I have mentioned elsewhere, had in a high degree the art of mingling the classics with the broader problems of the world outside. And Mr Frank Fletcher, I fancy, was fooled by no single boy during, at any rate, the five years of my own attendance. He was a past master in that withering type of satire that is one of the few weapons against which the schoolboy has no reply.

I recall with a shudder an ugly scene in which I figured in his Sixth Form Classical. It was the *Peloponnesian War* again. On the last occasion on which I had been attending, perhaps twenty minutes previously, the war was being disputed in Sicily. It was now at a place called Decelaea, back in Attica. I was gazing dreamily at the ceiling when I heard a far-away voice.

'Decelaea—yes, where's that? Er . . . *Longhurst.*'

Jerked to my senses, I looked helplessly round. I nudged my next-door neighbour on the back bench (he is now my insurance agent). No reply. 'It 's—er, in Sicily,' I ventured.

The icy barrage lasted for about five minutes. 'Where did you say it was? Sicily? Speak up, boy. Can anybody hear what he 's saying? I can't hear what he 's saying. I thought

he said Sicily. You *did* say Sicily? Can anybody tell him how long ago it was that the war was in Sicily? About twenty minutes? I suppose he hasn't heard a word any one has said for twenty minutes. Have you heard a word any one has said for twenty minutes, boy? . . .' And so on.

Soon afterwards there appeared in a school magazine the following limerick, written by one Everett:

An unwisely courageous back-bencher,
When asked, drew a bow at a venture.
'Decelaea? Um—er,
It 's in Sicily, sir.'
Moral. Silence is better than censure!

The public schools have one immeasurable advantage over nearly every alternative form of academy. That is, they are boarding schools, not day schools. Indeed, when you come to think of it, this difference is almost equivalent to a definition of the term 'public school.' Turn a good secondary school into a boarding school, and it becomes almost automatically 'public.'

A boy learns at least as much of his education from the close company of other boys as he does from those employed to instruct him. Incidentally I believe that no friendship between man and woman ever began to approach the intensity of the fellow feeling which boys may develop for one another. Which brings us automatically to that dark subject without which no discussion on school life is complete, a subject of which none of your professional 'educationists' can bring themselves to face the existence. Yet the problem prevails, and should be faced, in schools, in prisons, in the Army, in the Navy—in fact, in any congregation of males habitually denied the pleasures of female companionship.

This, I hope you will agree, is a topic on which a person may legitimately write without personal experience. For myself I have not strayed from the normal path for the good reason that I have never been tempted or inclined to do so. I had the good luck to be born with no 'queer' streak in my make-up. Others, through no fault of their own, were not so fortunate. If a man errs in this respect, I blame him. But if a fourteen-year-old boy errs in the same way, I blame his teachers. And here the public schools, and for all I know less exalted establishments too, have a lot to answer for.

Sex is the strongest single influence in human life. Sex

instinct alone is trusted by Nature to ensure the continuation of the species. Sex sends newspaper circulations soaring into the millions, it stares at us from every hoarding—bidding us buy cigarettes, toilet soap, electric batteries, anything under the sun—it makes fortunes for dress-designers, shoe-makers, hat-makers, cosmetics manufacturers; for theatrical and film impresarios; and indirectly for heaven knows how many others as well.

And what did the men to whom my father paid a small fortune for my education teach me of this, the predominating influence in life? Precisely nothing. And I mean nothing. The subject was never once mentioned in my presence by any person set in authority over me between the ages of seven, when I went as a boarder to my first preparatory school, and twenty-one, when I left Cambridge. Considering which, I reckon I haven't done badly.

The teaching of sex among the English is just one great and glorious failure. It has produced a deplorable percentage of the adult population whose opening topic of conversation is a smirking 'Have you heard this one?' What teaching there is is usually advanced haltingly by embarrassed parents or whispered by schoolmasters behind locked doors in an odour of sin, sanctity, and secrecy. The whole business is faintly dirty and unmentionable. Some will even criticize me for mentioning it here.

Yet the solution is perfectly simple. Sex should be taught to the young by the biology and zoology master at school. It should be treated in an open, matter-of-course way as part of the ordinary curriculum. Many thousands of Carthusians over the last forty years will remember Mr Oswald H. Latter, author of the standard text-book on zoology, and the most concise imparter of facts that I ever came across. Here was the ideal man for laying the groundwork of sexual knowledge in the adolescent mind, a man who with that curious nasal intonation that was the schoolboy mimic's joy could have reduced the subject to the dry-as-dust level of the reproductive systems of the earthworm and the frog. A matter of open, honourable facts instead of discreditable, hole-in-the-corner fancies.

Still, that 's rather a digression, for the public schools are no worse offenders in this respect than any other branch of our hundred-million-a-year educational system.

Some people, when they condemn the public schools, with an all-embracing loose thinking include the universities. You

generally find that their knowledge of Oxford and Cambridge extends to reading paragraphs in the evening newspapers announcing that an undergraduate has been fined ten shillings, with some stern remarks from the Bench, for climbing up a lamp post on Guy Fawkes night.

I was arguing with a rich man the other day. 'Be honest with me,' he said. 'You went to Cambridge. My son wants to go there. I say it 's a waste of his time and my money—though I agree that he 'd enjoy spending both of them. What do you say?'

'Well,' said I. 'Let us suppose that your son and I are both eighteen and we are of exactly equal merit. He goes into the office as you want him to do. I go off to Cambridge. At the end of three years I leave the university and join him in the office. By this time he knows quite a bit about the business, while I know little or nothing. In a couple of years I shall have caught up his knowledge of the business—but in a lifetime he will never catch up my three years at Cambridge.'

The man's son, I am happy to say, is at this moment at Cambridge—though he doesn't know he has me to thank for it.

The university acts as a kind of buffer state between boyhood and the responsibilities of being 'grown up.' In these three years the undergraduate builds up, by a system of trial by experience, his adult personality. His knowledge comes not merely from book-learning, but from people—and that is the best kind of knowledge in the world. Unless he belongs to one of the castes whose social and political outlook is immune from readjustment (or unless he is foolish enough to row, in which case he condemns himself to three years' solitary confinement among rowing men) he will come into contact with every class of society from the sons of American millionaires to scholarship boys from the Welsh mining valleys.

As a matter of fact, ruling out all the sentimental memories that an undergraduate holds dear for a lifetime—memories of firelight flickering in the windows of ancient courtyards in the misty winter twilight; of midnight climbs over spiked railings, and panting pursuits by the proctor's 'bulldogs'; of King's Chapel by moonlight, and idle hours dreamed away in punts on the 'Backs'; of May weeks and Guy Fawkes nights and other frivolities—ruling out all these ineffaceable and priceless memories, the purely commercial advantage of a university education is so enormous as to be almost unfair.

Take the young fellow I have mentioned. Casting aside the carefree life of 'living on father' at Cambridge, he sets out to earn his living. He now has contacts among a whole host of friends and acquaintances who have drifted into almost every branch of life. The very wearing of a tie associated with some form of Cambridge life will give him an immediate common interest with any of the hundred thousand odd persons who have passed through the university in the past forty years. If he has distinguished himself in some sport that is freely reported in the newspapers, nearly all these good people will already know his name.

The academic teaching available at the universities is the finest in the world, but again I believe that those in authority tend to seclude themselves too much from the outside world. The caricature of the university don is not so far from the truth.

The only compulsion exercised on undergraduates in my own time was that we should be in our rooms between the hours of midnight and six in the morning. What we did with the rest of our time nobody seemed to mind. We could spend the day in Paris, so far as they were concerned, so long as we could get there and back in the time. There was no compulsion, except in specialized subjects like science and engineering, even to attend the prescribed courses of lectures.

I am not complaining that this method did not get tangible results. It did. Through it I have the right to add the letters B.A. after my name. (I was a bit hard up at the time, three years later, when by payment of a fiver I might have turned them into M.A.—and I wasn't going to be a schoolmaster, anyway.) But I *am* complaining of its failure to recognize that to learn the art of Working is almost as important as the academic subject at which you 're working. It carried on to an enhanced degree the vicious public school principle of 'putting it off till the day after to-morrow.'

For myself, I did Economics, an all-round subject that even the economists have difficulty in defining, and I think it 's as good an education as you can have, if you are not already marked down for a specialized line of life like medicine or the law. The subject teaches you, though subconsciously, a lesson that stands you in good stead for the rest of your life: it causes you to see both sides of the question. When the examiner begins his question with 'What would happen if . . .?' or words to that effect, as he usually does, you may feel very strongly on the subject; but confine your answer to the expression of your own viewpoint and the best you can get is fifty marks out of a hundred.

What good is a university degree? some people ask. So far as I am concerned, none at all, though I should hate to have to confess that I had spent three years at Cambridge and not succeeded in getting one. No prospective employer ever asked me whether I had a degree, or in what subject. The document stating that I am a Bachelor of Arts I must have lost these ten years or more.

But the rest of those three years I can never lose.

NINE HOURS TO LIVE

One thing about newspaper life—you never know what 's going to turn up. Returning from lunch rather earlier than usual one afternoon, I was sitting idly in the *Sunday Express* office.

'There 's a man downstairs wanting to see the news editor,' said one of the girl secretaries. 'I didn't catch his name. Will you see him?'

'All right. Ask them to send him up.'

Previous experience told me the odds were ten to one on the man wishing to sell us an invention to win the war in a fortnight.

Into the waiting-room door there stepped a virile-looking man in the early forties, with glittering blue eyes and a pleasant smile, attired in a camel-hair coat and 'Anthony Eden' black hat. I inquired politely of what service I could be.

'Oh,' he said, rather sheepishly, 'it 's about my case. I 'm trying to reopen it."

I felt I ought to know all about his case, but the truth was I didn't know him from Adam.

'Let me see. I didn't quite get your name.'

He lowered his voice cautiously.

'I 'm Donovan,' he replied, as if that settled it. I am afraid I must still have looked puzzled.

'Dartmoor,' he whispered.

'Ah, yes. Of course, of course,' I replied. 'I am so sorry.' I didn't want him to realize that even then the name meant nothing to me. I drew up a chair for him at my desk and we started talking.

George Thomas Donovan, it turned out, was the 'hero' of the Dartmoor mutiny of 1932. He 'd been released a short time before and had come to sell us the 'inside' story of the mutiny. I promised to put his offer to the management and we arranged to meet in a day or two. Meanwhile I hastened to the cuttings library to look into the man's history.

With two other men he had been sentenced to death in 1926 for the murder of an old man who had died a month after being beaten up on the Brighton Downs, where he had been lured for a, shall I say, not wholly moral purpose. You may vaguely recall the case. It created a lot of interest at the time.

Donovan, it is fair to add, has not ceased in the past twelve years to protest that he was not present at the time of the murder. That in itself is not unusual, but he produced evidence purporting to show who was the third man present for whom he was mistaken and so nearly hanged. That evidence is unprintable here, being highly libellous to a certain individual still living. I will only say of it that it convinced me that there were at least good grounds for reopening his case.

He had come to sell his story of the Dartmoor mutiny. Not being a newspaper man, he did not realize that stored away in his mind were the still vivid impressions of an experience that every man, woman, and child among the rest of us have at some time or another imagined as happening to ourselves—an experience worth more than all the 'Big House' stories ever written.

'Gallows Cheated of its Prey.' No novelette could beat the drama of Donovan's tale of his last hours in Wandsworth as he recounted it over the fireside in my flat. The story needed no emotional embellishment, no fancy writing. The bare facts were enough. The *Sunday Express* thought highly enough of it to make it their main feature article. 'Nine hours to Live,' they called it. I think it may interest you, and by the editor's kind permission I reprint it.

I suppose there 's hardly a man in the world who has not at some time in his life imagined himself sitting in the condemned cell, due for execution in the morning. A good many have done it in real life.

I am one of the very, very few who have lived to tell the tale.

In March 1926 Friend Ernest Smith, a retired chemist, was

murdered near Brighton by three men in a motor car. On Friday, 13th July, Percival Leonard Taylor, James Weaver, and I were sentenced to death.

If I tell you that I was not present on the night when the deed was done, and that I had not seen these two men for several months, it is unlikely that you will believe me. Very soon, though, I think I shall be able to prove it—but that is a different story.

Well, that evening I found myself sitting in the condemned cell at Wandsworth, with six officers (we don't call them warders) to be with me, two at a time, night and day till I was executed. The cell was really two cells knocked into one, and quite bare except for a table, a small bed, and a chair or two. The only decoration was a crucifix.

The officers were very good fellows—one of them seemed even more upset than I was; he kept repeating: 'It doesn't seem right. It doesn't seem right'—and if we sometimes got on each other's nerves, it was the situation rather than any fault of theirs.

We talked, laughed very often, played cards and draughts till the early hours of the morning. Sometimes my mind would get completely carried away—but there was always that little voice waiting in the background to say; 'Haven't you forgotten something?'

The officers had to keep an 'Occurrence Book,' in which to record everything I did or said. You 'd think a new one could be afforded for each victim, but this one had done service for some time. Occasionally I got a glance at it. One of the names I noticed was that of the Frenchman, Vacquier, who had been hanged at Wandsworth four years previously for the murder of Alfred Jones, licensee of the Blue Anchor Hotel at Byfleet. Against it was the comment: 'Docile. Refused to play games.'

The officers used to bring in small luxuries for me and the wife of one of them sent me in a bunch of flowers every day. I lived on the prison diet. People seem to think a condemned man can have anything he likes: that 's not so—but I was allowed ten cigarettes and a pint of beer each day. Ten cigarettes don't go far in the condemned cell. I could have smoked a hundred a day.

Very soon the governor came to my cell. The scene, twelve years ago, is planted in my memory as if it were yesterday, and I remember him word for word. He said: 'I have in my hand

a paper which instructs me to inform you that the Sheriff of the County of Sussex has fixed your date of execution on August 15th at 8 o'clock.'

It sounds funny now, but I replied: 'Thank you very much.' It was all I could think of to say.

At first the burning resentment put everything else out of my mind. I am not a particularly religious man. Like many others, my religion is confined to believing that there is a God somewhere in heaven and leaving it at that. But for those first few days you could not have convinced me there was a God in heaven or earth.

I was kept going for ten days by hopes of my appeal. It failed.

With a week left I began to count the hours—160, 159, 158 . . . I looked out at the sky and thought: ' Well, I won't be seeing that again very soon.' Resentment passed, and at times I became strangely resigned.

At other times it was all I could do to stop giving way to my feelings. At Wandsworth the execution shed is only a few paces across the passage from the condemned cell. The doors are let in flush with the wall and painted the same colour. Thousands of people must have passed it without knowing it was there.

But I knew it was there, and in the dreary night hours nothing would stop my mind from wandering just across the passage to that shed, trying to imagine what it was like inside.

I petitioned Sir William Joynson Hicks, the Home Secretary. Again the governor came with a paper in his hand: 'I have to inform you that the Home Secretary finds no grounds for interference with your sentence and that you will be executed to-morrow.' Again, I could think of nothing better to say than 'Thank you.'

A few minutes later one of the two other men—I won't say which—was also informed that his last hope was gone. He was in the cell above me, and the way he carried on, crying and shouting, was about as much as I could stand. I got an officer to go up and tell him to stop.

On the afternoon of that day a bell rang, all the prisoners were locked away (they are not allowed to catch a glimpse of a condemned man), and I was taken to see my father and mother for the last time.

I stood behind a grill with a warder on each side. My father and mother were shown into a room on the far side of the passage, while another officer paced up and down the passage to see that nothing passed between us.

It was a pathetic interview and there wasn't much that we could think of to say. For a while we just stood and stared at each other.

'Never mind, boy,' I remember my father saying. 'I know it will be all right."

I told my mother to keep smiling—she was sixty-eight at the time—and she did her best to keep cheerful. She was quite brave until the end when, after about twenty minutes, we were told that the visit was over.

Then she broke down and sobbed. The last words I heard her speak were: *'I 'll meet you there. I 'll meet you there.'*

I went back to my cell for the last time. It 's hard to put my feelings into words. It was like the night you spend in hospital before an operation, intensified a hundred times.

I was sitting there ruminating, when across the passage I heard a sort of thud. A minute later I heard it again.

It was the executioner trying out the drop.

Time and again I tried to picture the scene on the morrow. Was it instantaneous, as people say?—though I don't see how they can tell. What would the executioner look like? Who would be there? What would they do?

Above all, what would *I* do? I think I was as much afraid of letting my feelings get the better of me as I was afraid of being hanged.

Later Canon T. Pym, of Southwark, a friend of long standing, came to visit me. He was to accompany me to the scaffold. He gave me a cigarette and we talked for a while about—football. Then: 'To-morrow,' he said, 'I want you to walk over like a brave man with your head up. I don't propose to read the burial service—I 'll just walk over with you.' His last words were: 'I 'll be here early in the morning.'

I sat down to wait for the end, and the hours began to slip by with uncanny speed. I won't say I was happy, but my spirit seemed consoled. I had no time left to waste on resentment.

At eleven o'clock that evening the cell door opened. The governor came in with the sheriff. I was sitting playing cards, I remember, and the object of his visit did not occur to me.

'Well, Donovan, I've got some good news. In my hand I hold a reprieve for you, and I am very pleased.'

'Thank you,' I said for the third time. He shook me by the

hand and so did my two officers. Did I jump and shout for joy, as a man might be expected, who had heard the best news the world can offer? No. I remember I walked slowly up and down around the cell, hardly speaking. My mind was numbed.

I was still in a sort of trance five minutes later when they whisked me out of the condemned cell and set me down as an ordinary prisoner to face the prospect of a lifetime in jail.

After a few months at Dartmoor I wondered many a time whether the exchange was worth while. Often I thought it was not. Now, fit, free, and forty-three, I know the answer.

Twelve years later Donovan was released from Maidstone. One of the first people he saw was his mother, now aged eighty.

It was after he had been in Dartmoor for four years that Donovan secured five years' remission from his nominally twenty years' sentence. He had become a 'bluecoat' man (in other words, he had earned special privileges) when the mutiny took place. Like every one else in Dartmoor, he knew it was coming, but he took little or no part in the early stages. When you 're in for life anyway, he observed, you let the others do the shouting. No sense in getting yourself a bad name.

His account of the mutiny was a stirring narrative, all the more entertaining for the matter-of-fact, detached, objective way in which he told it. He would have made a good reporter.

No one in the prison, it appears, slept a wink on the Friday night when it began. Men were shouting and rampaging in their cells all night. 'Let 's get a rope and hang him to the clock tower'—referring to Mr S. N. Roberts, the governor—was among the few printable remarks that Donovan could recall eight years later.

Mr Roberts, according to the convicts' way of thinking, was responsible for the abolition of the privileges that had made life passable in Dartmoor—especially that of sitting outside and conversing for a couple of hours on a summer evening. And you can imagine what that means when you 're locked in a cell for twelve hours at a stretch, and it 's three days' bread and water for being caught standing on a stool and looking out of the little iron window. The food apparently was so unpalatable that they 'd throw it on the ground and go hungry rather than eat it—which is saying something.

On the Saturday in question a pretty scene took place in the chapel when, at the hour when usually the chaplain read the news, the governor got up and said: 'I 've come to talk to you about the food.' If he thought to observe the light of hope and encouragement on the homely features of his four hundred listeners, the next few moments must have been something of a shock. With one accord they yelled: 'Get down and get out of it, you ——!' A few more pleas for a hearing, and his reception got steadily worse. There was nothing for it but to retire.

The chaplain, Captain Ball, then stepped into the breach. He started to read the news, and was howled down. With commendable optimism he gave out the number of the hymn. The organ started and one or two of the prisoners got up to sing. 'Sit down, you —— ——s' yelled the gentlemen at the back. The chaplain, noble fellow, went right through the hymn by himself—perhaps one of the most praiseworthy song renderings in history.

Saturday was another bad night.

On Sunday morning shouting and scrimmaging were heard in the passage as a man named Brown was taken off to the punishment cells. 'I saw blood all down the stairs,' said Donovan. The fun began in earnest at half-past ten during the morning exercise. All trace of discipline had gone. Warders shouted 'Stop talking,' and the reply was: 'Stop talking your —— self.'

Very soon the men from A hall ran round to those of B and D (C was shut) shouting: 'Brownie's been done in!' Those four words, inaccurate as they were, started one of the most sensational stories for years. By telephone, by wire, by aeroplane and hastily hired sports cars, Fleet Street descended on the little town of Princetown. But even now the full story has hardly been told.

I 'd give a tidy sum to have sat in a bullet-proof glass shelter in Dartmoor and watched the events of those brief two hours. A yelling mob surged up to the governor's office and shouted for Mr Roberts. It is no reflection on him to record that he failed to appear. If he had, says Donovan, he 'd have lost his life.

So they shouted for Colonel Turner, an assistant prison commissioner who had been sent by the Home Office to investigate the trouble that was brewing. Colonel Turner came out and

stood on the steps. It was the action of a brave man. 'Tell me what 's wrong,' he said, 'and I 'll straighten it out in the proper way.'

He had misjudged his audience. The mob set on him and pinned him against the wall. 'I 'll tell you what 's wrong,' said one man, and flung a bowl of Dartmoor porridge into his face. Another deftly purloined his watch, chain, and wallet. Two more had a length of rope and proposed to hang him from the tower.

It was at this point that Donovan stepped in and became the national 'hero' of the day. Shouting 'Don't be bloody fools—you 'll only get what I 've got,' or words to that effect—he was the only 'lifer' in the prison at the time—he pushed his way into the 'free for all ' and, after getting fairly well knocked about, managed to edge Colonel Turner along the wall to where an officer named Webb was able to push him through a door to safety. Incidentally the same officer saved the governor's life by slipping him out of the back door of the offices and locking him in a cell.

I tried to trace Donovan's motive in stepping in when he did. Being a shrewd fellow with an eye to the main chance, did he scent instinctively an opportunity of doing himself a good turn? Or did fear that the consequences of other men's foolhardiness would be visited jointly on his own head prompt him to try and reduce the damage to a minimum? Or were his motives, after all, purely and decently altruistic? After listening to him for the best part of a day I concluded that his motives were largely unselfish—if only, to put it at its lowest, because he had not sufficient time to weigh up the pros and cons of his action in advance.

Anyway, as a result his sentence was reduced by five years, and his brothers in misfortune, whose necks he may very well have saved, took his good luck so amiss that he had, for his own safety, to be moved to Maidstone. I believe they are threatening him still.

Robbed of their human spoils, the convicts ran completely amuck. A film doing justice to their activities of the next hours might be laughed off the screen as a ludicrous exaggeration. They seized the large ornamental stone flower pots outside the governor's office and hurled them through the windows. They broke in, heaped documents on the floor, and then set fire to these and, with them, the offices. One fellow emerged with the

governor's hat and coat on, with records, documents, and a typewriter under his arm.

Another mob made shrewdly for the officers' mess, where they looted cigars, cigarettes, wine, whisky, beer, and money, and went round offering drinks and free smokes to all and sundry. A good many, states Donovan, were blind drunk inside half an hour.

Two of the convicts with homosexual tendencies (why do none of our earnest prison reformers open their eyes to this, the greatest of all the 'human' problems of prison reform?) were found engaged in the potting shed.

What, I asked, were the officers doing all this time? The answer was that most of them, rightly, were standing still and making mental notes of the chief offenders. It was more than their lives were worth to do more. One brave man, perhaps recklessly so, went among the men when the others held back, telling them to go back to their cells. His name was John G. Lewis. He was bashed on the head with a rock and so terribly injured that he never worked again.

The first shot was fired by the engineer from the armoury roof with an old gun like a blunderbuss, aiming at men coming out of the officers' mess. A man named William Mitchell was shot as he was breaking windows on the roof of the twine shed. He fell to the ground shot through the head, neck, and arm, and was carried to hospital, where he nearly died.

A gang of men demanded the keys of the separate cells from two warders, one of whom drew his truncheon. 'Don't be a fool,' said the other—and handed over the keys. Another party raided the boiler-house, hoping to blow it up. A 'red band,' or specially privileged, convict by the name of Jordan, who was in charge of the boiler-house, turned the steam on them and got them out, knowing there was a warder hiding behind the boilers.

Alas, poor Jordan! Another officer arrived at the door, searching for prisoners, and shouted: 'Come out or I fire.' The occasion was too much for his nerves. The gun went off in his hand and Jordan was shot in the arm.

When the riot was at its height there occurred an incident that may never be matched in prison history, even in the United States. The governor's office was blazing like a firework display. Outside, the Dartmoor brass band marched up and down rendering at full blast *Keep the Home Fires burning.*

It is significant that hardly any attempt was made to escape from the prison. An exception, however, was one bright spirit

who forced an officer to hand over his coat and trousers, got out the prison fire escape, and put it against the outer wall. With a cry of 'Good-bye, boys,' he climbed to the top of the wall. He was met by a volley from the ring of armed officers surrounding the prison and fell off so quickly that he broke his nose on a rung of the ladder.

But things could not go on like this for ever. The damage had reached £3,000 when the big gates opened and police reinforcements dashed in. One charabanc load of thirty-five had covered the sixteen miles from Plymouth, with a rise of fourteen hundred feet from sea level, in twenty-four minutes. A few days later the police gave a dinner in the driver's honour.

The reinforcements asked no questions, but set about them with a will. Shouts by prison officers: 'Not those men. They 're not in it,' did not prevent a number of good-conduct men who had stood around and taken no part in the riot from getting stunning cracks on the head. It was just too bad that they happened to be standing near the gates.

Tempers were short. One of the higher police officials, who had better be nameless, lined up a group of prisoners and gave them one minute to empty their pockets. He was wearing plus-fours and carrying a big ash stick. 'What have you got there?' he said to a prisoner after the time limit had ended. 'A bit of bread.' 'Well, make a sandwich of that!' he announced, catching the man a colossal crack over the head with the ash stick.

Gradually the men were herded back to the cells. The hospital looked like a battle-field. One man had the back of his head bashed in, another was shot in the forehead, a third was shouting: 'I 'm blind. I 'm blind.' Moaning and screaming went on all night. The prison doctor, Dr Battiscombe, went round extracting pellets from the men. His assistant, aided incidentally by Donovan, followed with needle and stitches.

Later the ringleaders—though the mutiny was never in any sense 'organized'—were sorted out. With the exception, according to my information, of the principal one, who escaped to the cells in time and was never discovered, they received huge, one might almost suggest savage, additions to their sentences.

The official inquiry, whose report I have read with some care, seemed to prove that the mutiny was no one's fault in particular. But, then, that is the way of official inquiries. If I had to bet on it, I 'd rather back Donovan's explanation—though I am afraid the laws of libel prevent my going into it in detail.

PIED PIPER, 1940

You can have your grouse and pheasant massacres at a pound a bird, or your deer-stalking, yes, or even your fox-hunting, but for sheer excitement of the chase give me a day's ratting among the ricks at threshing-time, with a thin pliable stick—the novice cuts a stick as thick as a broom-handle and wonders why he does no good with it—and a lively terrier. There 's real, unforgettable sport for you.

I hadn't had a good day's ratting for fifteen years. For that matter I wasn't going to have one now, but it might be the next-best thing. I was going to interview a rat-catcher. Just another of those little episodes which, if you 've a grain of juvenile enthusiasm left in you, make the life of a journalist superior to that of the wealthiest stockbroker.

The rat-catcher lived in a little back street somewhere behind the Elephant and Castle. Small urchins, mocking at the spruceness of the toff's black hat and umbrella, had to be bought off with coppers as I made my way along to his abode. Fat women brawled across the street from their doorways. There were moments when I wished I hadn't come.

William Dalton, doyen of rat-catchers, is sixty-nine, and should at once be painted by George Belcher on the lines of 'The Landlord of the Chequers.' He wears a butterfly collar and overflows from a blue serge suit. I should put him at seventeen stone.

'Come in, sir. Come right in, me boy,' he roared, a nice blend of the respectful and the paternal. I stepped into the little parlour-office. The master rat-catcher was directing operations from a small kitchen chair, of which, as he sat on it, no part was visible. In the window beside the aspidistra sat a girl, by name Moll, tapping out the accounts on a weary typewriter, and parrying with a ready sauce the Rabelaisian observations of the old man.

A stuffed ferret labelled 'Old Joe' snarled at the visitor from a glass case over the mantelpiece. Beside him were rows of keys that would have turned a burglar green with envy. They belonged to the banks, business houses, and warehouses that Mr Dalton numbers among his clients. Pinned to the wall was a charred envelope, bombed by the I.R.A. in a pillar-box.

The business, he told me, bellowing genially across the four

feet that separated us, was founded by a Dalton in 1710 and has been in the family ever since. He does not do much active work himself these days, but the firm's sixteen 'catchers' are all Daltons or related to Daltons. Young Daltons are trained in the mysteries of the profession the moment they leave school. It says much for the family loyalty that not one of them since 1710 has ever revealed the method by which in the course of a single night they will catch, and *bring home alive*, as many as a thousand rats.

Rats are the canniest, craftiest of man's enemies. A man may have his house infested with them, yet never set eyes on one. A couple of Daltons will go out with their Gladstone bags and come back in the morning with every rat in the house tied safely in a sack.

How do they do it? With traps, with their hands, with some magical, invisible bait? Or what is their secret weapon? All they 'll tell you is that they 're not poisoners—for poisoners they 've the contempt of the opera singer for the microphone crooner—and they 're not Pied Pipers. With high glee 'The Guv'nor' produced, doubtless for the thousandth time, a tattered leaflet advertising a man who styled himself 'The Great Lafini.' He had an accordion and claimed to charm rats from their holes 'with or without music.' It was an unfortunate moment when in a pub one day he tried some sales talk on Dalton senior.

A clatter outside the parlour announced the return of two of the old man's sons who had been engaged in a side-line, catching pigeons in Parliament Square for the Westminster City Council. They had had a tiresome afternoon, harassed by a woman who said she spent a shilling a day in feeding the birds, and generally outwitted by the birds themselves. Only caught thirty. Last time it had been a hundred and forty. 'You couldn't catch a —— pigeon if it was served up in a —— pie,' said the Guv'nor.

Public sentiment prevents their using nets, so they sidle up to the birds, and with a deft snatch thrust them under their mackintoshes and wring their necks at the same time. I saw a hamper with a hundred odd corpses neatly on their backs in rows.

'What do you do with them?'

'Sell 'em in the market.'

'What do they taste like?'

'Taste like? They taste of what you 'd think they 'd taste of —petrol and 'orses.'

We adjourned to the back yard.

The shed in the yard was a mortuary-menagerie. Corpses of rats, mice, beetles, cockroaches laid out in rows: a bushel basket of dried-up rats' tails. How many? The old man consulted his note-book: 1931—47,000 rats. Last year business had improved on account of the war. Rain to drive the rats indoors, sandbags for them to lurk in, and the black-out, combined to cause a ratting 'boom.' Total bag, 72,826. 'Let you 'ave thirteen 'undred tails a week, if you want 'em.

'Now I 'm going to show you something you 've *never* seen before—nor any one else either for that matter.' Seizing an iron bar, he prodded viciously in the dark end of a long wire cage. A squealing grey mass of rats streamed through the little hole in the partition. (Have you noticed how rats don't seem to run? They *flow*, especially *en masse*: an uneasy spectacle.) The more he prodded, the more rats came out, till they were piled high on each other and clinging upside down to their wire ceiling. I imagined one running up my trouser-leg, as the spectator at the flea circus imagines a non-existent itch.

'He 's here somewhere. Ah, there he is, the beauty!' A single rat emerged, took a look round—and chucked itself head over heels backwards. Two paces forward, and it did it again. And again. And again. Twelve times in ten seconds.

'Two of my boys and I went to a warehouse down by the docks the other night, and what do we see but two 'undred of 'em turning somersaults. "Dalton," I said, "you 've got 'em coming on. It 's time you gave up." But it was true. We caught two hundred and eighty that night and every one of 'em did it. Don't ask me why. No one can tell us. We 've 'ad medical gentleman and university professors to look at 'em—we kept a dozen of these rats—but none of 'em can explain it.'

If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, sober, in mid-afternoon, I would not have believed it. Perhaps you don't now. If not, I hardly blame you.

More than ever I wondered what was the secret weapon by which seven generations of Daltons have tricked the craftiest wits in the animal kingdom. One night they caught sixteen hundred rats in three hours in a Romford brickfield, while the remainder counter-attacked by gnawing the tyres of their motor car. You or I probably would not have seen a rat all night.

'After fifty years with 'em,' said the Guv'nor, as he drew a big brown rat by the tail from another cage and exhibited it

nonchalantly on his sleeve, 'you know what a rat's going to do before he knows it 'imself.'

Perhaps that 's the secret.

'CONTINENTAL COVER'

THEY 'VE just sent me a pathetic little document, soliciting the sum of fifteen shillings for a renewal of my Golfer's Insurance. Ten shillings of it insures me against all manner of misfortunes and misdemeanours on the links in Great Britain. The other five is for 'Continental Cover.'

Continental Cover, indeed: I wonder how long it will be before we need that again.

One of the reasons why I have always been grateful that my life chanced to become bound up with this much-ridiculed pastime is that it gives you an excuse and a purpose for travel. Nothing in the world is more dull than purposeless travel—wandering about in strange places looking at the sights and saying: 'Well, I never. Fancy its being as old as that!' The Continental golf championships made an ideal background. You tried like the devil when you were on the course—and let the game go hang when you weren't. Which is the way to play golf or any other game.

Golf took me in the years before the war to Germany, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Holland, innumerable times to France, and twice to the United States; and in doing so, added richly to the store of memories from which most of us, it seems, will have to take our holidays for some years to come.

There was a school of thought, among those who stayed at home, that Continental championships were just any one's money—possibly because I once won one. But when they came to try for themselves, they soon found the error of their ways. Some of Britain's most distinguished golfers went in search of European titles year after year—and never won one.

The reason was what I christened the Continental jitters. I saw men whose names resound in the golfing world at home suffer from this strange, almost hypnotic, malady. Heaven knows, I suffered agonies with it myself sometimes. The symptoms are roughly as follows:

You are anything from three to six hundred miles from home. The course is short, but exceedingly narrow, cut usually through a pine forest. It gives you the impression that you are playing in blinkers. You start off with a glorious abandon, probably with a sixty-nine, but soon the trees begin to close in on your spirit and a kind of creeping caution overtakes you. 'Anything to keep the damned thing in play' becomes your motto, as you hear balls bouncing hollowly among the tree trunks.

The draw, usually surreptitiously 'seeded,' shows that you have an excellent chance, if you keep your head, of reaching at least the semi-final. It is now the second round, and you have been given to understand overnight that your opponent, a man whose name you cannot pronounce, whose language you cannot speak, and who wears a beret, is, in boxing parlance, a 'pushover.' 'That fellow?' they have told you. 'Why, you 'll beat him by eight and seven!'

Meanwhile you are out in thirty-seven, which is neither good nor bad, and Mr Pumpelheimer, or whatever his name may be, is out in thirty-five (for the first time in his life) and is two up. Never mind, you will catch him on the way in. Talent must tell.

He starts home with a two at the short tenth, his shot kicking outrageously from a bunker to the green, and is three up. This is serious. Dark thoughts run through your mind of all that this is costing you; better have saved your money and stayed at home.

You win back a couple of holes and begin once more to believe in the justice of your cause. At the seventeenth the man's ball, struck smartly off the socket, ricochets among the trees and kicks back on to the green within a foot of the hole. With a wry smile you shake hands and prepare the 'alibi' for your return to the clubhouse. You have gone and done it again. Perhaps, to make matters worse, your opponent says to you, as did mine at Fourqueux, near Paris, in the French championship one year: 'I wouldn't beat you once in a hundred times.'

General Critchley won that championship. His turn for trouble came a year or two later at Morfontaine, when he played a man called Charlier early one morning. Charlier—I wonder where he is now?—holed out in one putt on pretty well every green. When asked what he lost by, Critch replied curtly: 'Half-past ten!'

The passing of one element of Continental life will be much mourned by Englishmen—of whom I shall not be one. I mean that glittering, superficial, falsely glamorous life symbolized

by Le Touquet, Deauville, Monte Carlo, and Cannes. Two or three days in these places I could enjoy, observing the manner-less vulgarities of so-called Society with the detached curiosity of a man who upturns a flat stone. At the end of three days I usually began to develop revolutionary views and had to move on.

I don't mind what an Englishman does with his money, but I do object to two things. I hate to see my own people taken automatically, and not without cause, for 'suckers' by foreigners (by jingo, yes, I do!), and I object very strongly to the ludicrous demeanour of the average casino gambler. I dare say there were few more pathetic scenes in our present civilization than the 'big table' of the modern casino. There they used to sit—fat, greasy men and lean, swarthy men; honest, stupid men and dishonest, far from stupid men; Lancashire and Yorkshire, wishing to hell their wives were still content with Blackpool and Bridlington, and crinkly-haired Mayfair half-commission men, hoping to hell they 'd make enough to cover the cheque they cashed before coming away; advertising men, film men, oil men, confidence men, peers, commoners, and bucket-shop proprietors; and the Levantines, and the Argentines, and the Greeks.

Among them would be a sprinkling of those weather-beaten old crows who seem to thrive only in the fetid atmosphere of casinos. Gnarled, wrinkled old women, rattling with jewellery and for ever daubing a further layer on their faces to cover the ravages of late hours, sexual frustration, and *anno Domini*. And accompanied, as likely as not, by some sickening little olive-skinned gigolo.

One thing they all had in common. They never lost the illusion that if they won money, it was due to their own shrewdness and skill. If they lost, it was the run of the table.

I think of all these places Deauville probably bored me more comprehensively than the rest, for, broadly speaking, it had English weather. Even the golf course was quite uncommonly dull. Le Touquet, on the other hand, had, to cover its various iniquities, one of the finest golf courses in Europe, intelligently laid out among the sandhills and hugely long. I should shed a small tear if the Germans prove to have considered this a military objective; but Deauville's they can plough up for cabbages, for all I care. I can see them growing pretty well there.

The French championships, however, were nearly always held

on the Paris courses, and what fun that was, with the franc at 175 to the pound! This rate of exchange, incidentally, suited both parties. The Parisians diddled you by doubling the bill. You, on the other hand, did not have to lose time or dignity by disputing it, for the amount was still substantially less than it would have been in England.

The French professionals were a delightful crowd of fellows, and often I wonder how many have survived these terrible years. Where, for instance, is that inexhaustible, irrepressible little Basque, Jean Saubaber, with whom I was partnered in the last open championship? A temperamental golfer, Saubaber got his teeth into the game—literally. When he missed a short one, he would pick up his ball and bite right through the cover. Alternatively, he would cast it on the ground and jump on it.

They tell a wonderful tale of Saubaber at San Remo, a course which the Italians chopped at huge expense out of the olive groves on the mountain-side. At one hole—the fifth, if I remember rightly—you drive from a positive precipice. The ball soars away against the mountain background, and then drops down and down and down until at last it seems to pitch almost at your feet (a well-known optical illusion this. Compare driving balls off an ocean liner: you reckon they will pitch in the seventh wave distant from the ship—and they barely carry the first).

At any rate, when you have driven off from this tee at San Remo, you proceed for several minutes down a zigzag path and later emerge on the fairway. Saubaber drove off and his ball soared away and pitched, before all eyes, clean in the middle of the fairway. But when they got down there, there was no ball to be seen. It had been raining (I have never been to San Remo when it didn't rain) and Saubaber's ball was, in golfing parlance, a 'sucker,' in other words it was embedded in its pitch. And so by the rules of the game poor Saubaber, unable to find it, had to go back to the tee and play another. I 'd give a lot to have been present when he looked back at that tee, perched high up the mountain. They say his language was some of the richest ever heard in Italy. The journey back took him approximately fifteen minutes.

Last time I met him, I stood him a bottle over the bar at Fourqueux and got him talking of his recent visit to Scotland to play in our open championship at Carnoustie. Poor Saubaber! That vast and relentless course had left him almost powerless with exasperation. The sheer length of it exhausted his short

legs, and the wind and the rain shrivelled his spirit. The constant veering of the wind, in particular, annoyed him. It transpired that at the sixteenth hole in a practice round he had taken a No. 2 iron and with a strong following wind had gone over the green. So he tried a No. 3 and that too went over. He determined to get it right, and took out a No. 4. Over the back it went again. Finally he was reduced to his No. 5, and when that went over the back with the rest he threw down his club and marched off. Next day he came to the same hole in the championship. The wind had changed. Saubaber took a full shot with a driver—and was short.

Another Frenchman at whom I never ceased to marvel was one Paul Haussegy. Accident of birth had equipped his left hand with a thumb but nothing else except a single inch-long stump of the index finger. Yet this man, of all the callings in this life, had chosen that of a professional golfer. He hooked the club, as might a lobster, in the claw formed by his thumb and stump, and then swung it, pendulum fashion, with his right hand. Last time I played in a tournament with him he had two rounds of seventy-one.

Of the twenty-one trips to the Continent for which I managed to make golf the excuse in the last half-dozen years, the one I remember best was to Chamonix, where the golf played a very minor part. They had invited me to go over to write about the new course they had laid out in the valley beneath Mont Blanc. There was nothing much to it. It was flat and it was short—so short, in fact, that I got round it in sixty-five, and would have won a handsome prize had not Cyril Tolley somehow got round it in sixty-four.

But Chamonix itself, where they 'll show you the villa in which Stavisky was shot, is a delightful little place. The River Arve dashes pell-mell through the heart of it, icy cold from the mountains, twisting in and out between the houses, and everywhere you find that tranquil, unhurrying atmosphere peculiar to folk who live their lives among the mountains. In the silent evenings the pavements ring with the hobnailed tramp of men who at dawn were but specks in the telescopes, high up on the peaks.

Mountaineering fascinates me. I am not one of those clever persons who prove it pointless to risk one's life clambering up a barren crag. You can apply the same *reductio ad absurdum* to any sport. I can understand well the high sense of achievement

that comes from conquering the peaks. I cannot live for a week among the mountains, gazing daily at the familiar summits, so clear and somehow so near, without sensing the challenge.

What mystery do they hold in the white silence up there? I know there is no mystery. I can detect their barrenness with my telescope. But the challenge remains. 'Come up and see for yourself—if you can,' it seems to say. And because I could not answer the challenge, I could never live among the mountains.

I am no more frightened than the next man of the ordinary accidents and hazards of life, nor when I look down over the thousand-foot parapet of the Empire State Building do I experience the common desire to cast myself overboard. But rope me to another man and place me on a tiny foothold on the side of a precipice, and a hopeless, unreasoning terror would grip my soul. I believe, though pray God it may never be put to the test, that I would cut the rope and fling myself deliberately down, rather than face the next step.

I am not ashamed of this. It is not a question of fear and courage. There is no courage given to mortals which can overcome the stark terror of the heights. One day the scientists will discover the infinitesimal difference in the brain, or wherever it may be, that makes one man glory in the thrill of creeping like a fly over an abyss and the next man, no whit less courageous in other walks of life, shudder and perspire, as I am perspiring even now, at the very thought of it.

What is the most gripping tale you have ever read? I know my own answer. Time after time I have read it, and still its thrill is fresh. It is the story of man's attempts to conquer the Eigerwand, 'the Wall of the Ogre,' that mile-high precipice beside the Jungfrau. Each year they try. Each year they die.

The great wall is mostly vertical, sometimes overhanging. It is covered with a thin veneer of ice, and there is no shelter from the stones that hurtle down as the sun begins to melt the ice in the morning. At no point is there a ledge sufficiently wide to lie upon, and the climber must spend the nights lashed to the icy rock.

Typical of the attempts on the Wall was that of four Germans a few years ago: Rainer and Angerer, from Austria, and Kurz and Hinterstoisser, from Bavaria, all young men with long records of dangerous climbs. They started their climb two hours after midnight one July morning, and when the telescopes in the valley picked them up at midday they were going strongly

like sure-footed ants on the face of the Wall. So confident were they at this early stage that one of them took photographs. One of these shows Angerer leaning out into space supported only by his rope.

Then they came to a full stop. Above them the Wall was impossible. By moving perilously downwards across a sheer rock face they could reach the beginning of a new line of ascent. They knew, all four, that if once they got across they could never get back. It would be the top of the Wall or nothing. They decided to cross.

It took them an hour to cross the fifty-yard space. Then they set off upward again. As evening fell, the weather turned against them. Lightning crashed around them, thunder echoed from the Wall, and its face was streaming with rain and snow and stones. All night they cowered on the precipice, their clothes frozen around them, their four lives hanging on a half-inch rope. Perhaps from time to time, from sheer fatigue, they dozed on their awful perch. I shudder as I think what must be the feelings of a man who wakes to find himself half frozen, suspended over space.

Next morning the sun thawed them and they climbed on, but clouds hid them from the watchers in the valley. They passed another night hanging on the Wall.

Some time next day they held a conference, clinging to their tiny footholds. The Wall had won. They decided, despite the impossible passage they had crossed, to try to come down.

Then someone in the valley remembered that the Jungfrau Railway, tunnelling through the solid rock of the Eiger, comes close to the face of the Wall and that a window looks out. Four guides roped themselves together, clambered out of this window, and began chipping their way, step by step and handhold by handhold, across the icy slope towards the Germans.

The trapped climbers were roped together, one above the other, when Hinterstoisser, at the top, fell. As he hurtled down, the rope whipped itself around the neck of Angerer and throttled him to death where he stood. Hinterstoisser's body wrenched loose from the rope, and on its dreadful journey crashed into Rainer and so injured him that in a few minutes he died. Kurz alone was left alive, roped to his two dead comrades.

He hung against the cliff, beaten, exhausted, with one arm frozen and useless, clinging with the other to his last faint hopes of life. The guides came nearer, within shouting distance.

Weakly he told them he could not live through another night.

Then the storm came on again, darkness fell, and the retreating guides had to leave him on the face of the Wall.

Next morning they clambered out again. He was still alive. They came within little more than the length of a cricket pitch beneath him. They shouted to him to cut away the body of Angerer, which at last he managed to do, the body nearly crashing against them as it fell. Then for three hours Kurz struggled to knot a rope together and lower it to the guides, and on this they sent up a rope sling.

The lowering could only be done by Kurz himself. Slowly, painfully, he came down. One of the guides secured a firm foothold and another climbed precariously on his shoulders. With his axe he could almost touch the nails of Kurz's boots. For the German, only a foot or two now separated life and death. It was at this point that the rope jammed.

Kurz yanked feebly at it, but it would not clear. His body, and now his spirit, was exhausted. Casting his axe away, he let go his hold and swung out into the air, dangling twenty feet clear of the cliff. And there he died.

It was at Chamonix that they took me, for the last time in my life, in that hideous contraption known as a 'Téléférique,' or aerial railway. They have two of them. The first ascends the mountain on a series of pylons. The second goes from the top of the first, clean across the valley to a peak high up on the other side. The railway consists of a large open box slung on wheels on the overhead wire, counterbalanced by a similar box at the top. After many an anxious glance I failed to discover just how they worked and why the boxes did not run straight back along the wire and down into the machinery.

The party was to ascend to the top of the second Téléférique and then walk down. While we waited our turn, I witnessed a little unfinished drama of which I have always yearned to know the conclusion.

'Persons are to be observed on Mont Blanc to-day,' read the notice beside an old man's telescope (one franc per peep) near the station. I paid my franc and had my peep. On the snowy summit of Mont Blanc I at last discerned four tiny figures, making their way down. Dark against the snow, it was difficult to believe that they were not visible to the naked eye, and often I thought I could detect them. But when I looked again

through the telescope I saw that the little black marks I had seen were in reality great rocky crags jutting from the snow.

Half an hour passed and, as we were still waiting, I had another franc's worth. In the same snowfield were the figures, but this time there were only two. One was lying in the snow, the other bending over him. Farther down the other two were hastening for help. I am still wondering. Did they get it in time?

When our turn came it was in no mood for meddling with mountains that I stepped into the box and took my seat beside the lordly Tolley. I wondered whether beneath that handsome, phlegmatic countenance there lurked doubts similar to mine.

Bells rang, and with a jolt the big red box heaved itself upward on its wire. We sat silently side by side, taking in the wonderful scenery, neither mentioning the subject that was uppermost in his mind. At last our box surmounted the last of the pylons and clanked to a standstill. We got out and proceeded through a passage cut through the rock. Emerging we saw another red box, smaller, frailer, and this time devoid of seats. The wires dipped away across a valley that must have been a thousand feet deep, and high up on the crag the other side I saw the tiny red speck that I knew to be our box's counterbalancing companion.

Soon I found myself wedged in with the rest of the party, all of whom were French and presumably trustful of their country's engineers. In a moment I wished I had the moral courage of Tolley. He took one look at the box and one look at the peak on the other side.

'No,' he said.

The man in charge of the box began to get agitated. So did the others. There were cries of 'Venez vite, Monsieur Tollee!' and such like. He was not to be shaken.

'No,' he said quietly. 'Not that!'

So with a jolt and a clank we were off again, creeping like an inverted Blondin across the wire. The view was positively stupendous. I leant over the side and took some photographs, but soon I was compelled to edge my way into the centre. I was standing there muttering to myself that such fears were unworthy, that the contraption had been running for years and they probably inspected it every month or so, and that it was as safe as the London underground railway—when suddenly I caught my breath. The valley—I could see it between my feet. The

floorboards did not meet within half an inch. And as I gazed down, there came the realization that the only thing that separated me from eternity was a plain piece of board, less than an inch thick. I hastened back to the side and spent the remainder of the trip with one elbow over the edge.

At last we came to within six feet of the little square, hacked out of the sheer rock, into which the box fitted. A few seconds more . . . At that point the box stopped. My God, I thought, the other one 's reached the bottom and we are going to be left here, hanging in space. Man was meant to climb mountains on his own two feet, I reflected, and this was our punishment for trying to side-track Nature. It served us right. I would have given half a year's income, cash down, to have got out of that box. Indeed, trivial though the incident may sound, I think I was never more frightened in all my life. Look back on the occasion in your own life when you were most terrified and you may find it equally trifling.

When the box at last jerked its way across the final six feet, hurling itself into its niche in the rock, I noticed a curious reaction, which I have since found to be not uncommon. As I got out, I deliberately put my hands on the ground, as though to make double contact with man's natural element, Mother Earth, separation from which had induced in me the terror of the small child that has lost its parent. It must have been a grotesque posture, but I don't think anything in the world, certainly no will of my own, could have stopped me doing it.

Meanwhile, what of Tolley? Nothing would induce him to make his way down in the way he had come up, so he buttonholed an official at the top and said: 'Show me the path. I wish to walk down.'

'Certainly,' said the man, and, taking him to the edge of a yawning abyss, pointed over and said: 'Voilà!'

Tolley looked gingerly over the edge and retired with averted eyes to the little restaurant, where he ordered a bottle and settled down to think out his future. At first it seemed there was no alternative but to have his meals sent up and live permanently like a hermit on the mountain. Two more bottles made up his mind. Slowly and with much dignity he rose and launched himself over the edge of the path.

Hours later, down in the hotel, we agreed that the Téléférique had lost two potential customers that day. When, a few months later, we read that the machine had slipped from its wire and

for nine hours in mid-winter had left a party of skiers suspended twixt heaven and earth on the emergency wire, and that the whole lot had had to be rescued by breeches buoy, we were quite sure.

ON THE AIR

I CLAIM to be one of the very few persons for whom the British Broadcasting Corporation have hired a special aeroplane. Why a body so notoriously cautious of the pence should have been seized with such prodigality with the pounds I never could fathom, but there you are. It happened.

I was in Leeds at the time, watching an English golf championship. So was John Burnaby—yes, son of Davy—who was running the 'B.B.C. Ballroom' feature. This programme, you may recall, was of the 'Ah, but who have we here?' variety. Herman Darewski and his band played dance music, interrupted from time to time by the compère, who would announce the supposedly fortuitous entrance of various persons either famous in their own right or with some topically interesting tale to tell. Put me in the second of these two varieties.

Most listeners thought the performance was relayed from a real ballroom—and all the more credit to the producers for that—but, in fact, it took place in a studio, and was attended by friends of the cast who provided suitable 'noises off' by dancing.

Burnaby thought an account of the golf final would amuse his patrons and so, as there was no time to get back from Leeds by train, he somehow contrived to have a plane waiting at Yeadon airport near by. The young pilot and I squeezed in with my suitcases, and he handed me the map, on which to follow our course, neatly charted with a red line from Yeadon to Heston.

I don't know whether you have ever tried to find your way in an aeroplane (or, as the *Daily Express* has it, airplane)? Quite extraordinary. On a fine day such as this, when you can see the factories, railways, reservoirs, and green fields of England for twenty miles on either side, you 'd think it impossible for a six-year-old child to lose himself.

We soared smoothly into the firmament and I thought of the thousands of little folk (all folk seem little when you are flying above them, just as all drivers of Austin Sevens seem little men when you pass them in a forty-horse-powered car)—I thought of the thousands of short-legged little folk toiling and sweating in the mills and workshops of the smoky smudges that lay beneath us.

'That 's Bradford behind us on the right,' said the pilot. 'Leeds on our left, Barnsley straight ahead.

'And there 's the railway, along there.' He pointed it out on the map. I followed perfectly.

'But the best landmarks,' he added, 'are water. Rivers, lakes, ponds, anything. They shine, and you can tell them apart by their shape. One railway 's the same as another.'

I appreciated that in a foreign country this might be of some assistance. Here at home it seemed rather superfluous. Still, I followed our progress diligently for the fun of the thing, pretending I was the pilot of an enemy bomber intent on raiding Oxford, over which we were due to pass.

Seven minutes later I was hopelessly, irretrievably lost. I searched for water. Yes, there was a reservoir gleaming in the evening sun. Not marked on my map, apparently. Three times within the hour I was lost, several inches 'out' on the map. Three times the pilot set me right. I marvelled that a man could set off at dawn from remote Mildenhall, as did the England-Australia flyers, and land unerringly at Baghdad on the following day.

In a sudden rainstorm we passed a few hundred feet over Whipsnade on the crest of the Dunstable Downs, circled twice round the pilot's home at Harrow to signify that he would be home to dinner, and landed at Heston an hour and a quarter after leaving Yeadon.

A friend of Burnaby's then drove me to Broadcasting House in exactly twenty-seven minutes, though how this journey can be done in less than forty-five I still cannot see. But for getting tangled up with the White City dog-racing traffic, he said, we should have been much quicker.

My old schoolfellow, 'Stinker' Murdoch, who had not yet attained his present 'Band Wagon' eminence, and I, did our cross-talk piece in the 'ballroom,' and incidentally I was furnished with yet another instance of how easy it is in this life to offend people unwittingly. I described how Frank Pennink had won the golf championship and told how at some hole or another Frank was on the green and the other fellow in a bunker.

The 'other fellow' is perfectly normal golfing parlance as an alternative for 'his opponent,' but that did not stop some irate Yorkshire citizen writing, anonymously as usual, to the *Sheffield Telegraph* saying that this was just another instance of the bias of the South against the North, etc. The 'other fellow' in this case was that most amiable of golfers, Sydney Banks. I am sure that he at least was not offended.

Though not a confirmed radio listener, I must confess that I enjoy broadcasting. Perhaps because I never cease to wonder at the miracle of it all—and at the number of people that seem to have heard one at the most unlikely hours. A man must be *blasé* indeed not to be intrigued when an uncle in Australia writes to say: 'We heard your broadcast last night while we were having breakfast this morning.'

People often ask whether talking into a microphone is not a highly nerve-racking business. I can imagine circumstances in which it might well be. Trying to be funny, for instance, without the barometer of a live audience must be agony. Imagine standing alone in a studio cracking gags, with no means of telling whether the world is rocking its sides or switching off by millions. An appalling thought.

For myself, for two reasons I have never experienced anything more than the passing tenseness that precedes any form of zero hour. In the first place the commentary is the easiest form of broadcast. One goes to the microphone with a happy sense of 'I 'm not asking you. I 'm telling you. I saw it, and you didn't'—an attitude of mind far removed from that of the poor wretch whose main thought is: 'Will they like me?'

Secondly, I had a fortunate broadcasting baptism, when I was asked to do a cross-talk with a caddie. This meant that I had to write the script and generally be responsible for putting the thing across, filling in awkward pauses, putting my partner at his ease, and so forth. If any one was to have the jitters, it was to be the caddie. His name was F. Clarke, of Folkestone, and I may add that he answered up as though he had been broadcasting every week of his life.

Before a twenty-minute broadcast I must admit I have had moments of acute nervous apprehension that maybe I have not made notes of sufficient subjects and therefore may have to start repeating myself. There is no silence so pregnant, I can assure you, as the silence in a little broadcasting-room when the speaker

has 'dried up,' and the microphone stares him in the eye like a snake hypnotizing a rabbit. Considering the volume of words you can pour out in five minutes, a twenty-minute broadcast, just before you start, seems an eternity. But once you are in full stride it 's all you can do to cram in the total of what you have to say. Provided you know your subject.

Where some broadcasters fail—among them highly distinguished and intelligent personages—is that they don't appreciate that radio is a medium for *talking*, not for writing or for reading the written word. I listen much more readily, and I am sure you do too, to a man who slips in an occasional 'What I mean to say is . . .' a man who says don't and wouldn't instead of do not and would not, than to a man who is clearly reading a manuscript on the desk before him. To quote names would be invidious, but you must have noticed this tendency among certain speakers in that well-conceived series 'From the Front Bench,' in which ministers spoke nightly to the nation about the progress of their departments. How much more effective some of them would have been if they had come to the microphone and talked frankly in a matter-of-fact, everyday tone of voice instead of booming forth, carefully rehearsed, the abstract nouns and passive verbs by which Whitehall loves to express itself.

And incidentally, does not that apply to the Church as well?

To give them their due, though, to put over a talk from a manuscript (and in these days no man is big enough to evade the B.B.C. rule of 'sticking to the script') is an art that needs a surprising amount of practice. The trouble is that some people don't realize it is an art at all. The outside commentator is almost the only broadcaster left who is allowed the advantage of speaking extempore.

The difference between the two types of broadcasting was well illustrated, in my own experience, by two rather similar types of programme compèred by Howard Marshall. The first was 'At the Black Dog.' The second was the series, mainly on sport, that used to be broadcast from Marshall's house in Trevor Square. 'At the Black Dog' had a script. The others didn't.

The 'Black Dog' programmes were meant to be the spontaneous chatter of a group of people meeting fortuitously in the bar parlour. Mine host and his wife, delightfully done by Cyril Nash and Sunday Wilshin, were permanent performers. So, of course, was the customer-in-chief, Howard Marshall. The rest of the company were drawn from all spheres of life. They were

handed their script when they arrived, and it can't be denied that some of them, to the listener, were only too clearly 'reading their piece,' not talking casually in the bar parlour.

I may add that the 'Black Dog' programmes were uniformly successful and highly popular with listeners at home and all over the empire, and that with the infinite variety of people who came to take part in them, many of whom had never broadcast before, there was no alternative to having a script. I am talking merely of general principles.

I only took part in one broadcast from Marshall's house, but I always thought them the most interesting feature of their kind. Here was real spontaneity. No script. No rehearsal, except a general survey of subjects in the ten minutes before the red light went up. Every one at ease.

The mobile broadcasting van would be drawn up outside the house, guarded by a special policeman, and wires stretched through Marshall's first-floor drawing-room window. The decorative Mrs Marshall made the guests feel at home with 'gin and tonic . . . whisky . . . beer . . . sherry?' before and during the performance, and smoking was, of course, allowed. (How much better a good many broadcasts would be if they allowed smoking in the B.B.C. studios. I have even seen people who could not get a word out until they twiddled an unlit cigarette in their fingers.)

These broadcasts were faded in while the conversation was already going on, thus embracing the homeliness of the atmosphere, and also faded out at the end. We sat around on sofas and easy chairs, with three microphones distributed between us. Even the telephone was left connected, and I recall its ringing in the middle of the broadcast. Mrs Marshall answered it and announced that a man had rung up to say that one of the speakers had just quoted a wrong date for some sporting incident.

One of the company was to have been W. H. Austin, the tennis player, who was performing at Queens Club that week. His match was postponed and, as he could not leave Queens, he had to default. Marshall sent a friend along in a cab to scour the highways and byways of the club and drag along any one whose name might be known to listeners. The broadcast was already under way when the door opened and in walked the American tennis star, Mrs Sarah Palfrey Fabyan—a slim, dark, athletic young woman, attractive beyond the common run of women games players.

I must say I hand that girl full marks. She had no idea—and there was no time to explain—what she was meant to do. She couldn't ask because it would have spoilt the broadcast. She entered a room full of 'live' microphones, into which four strangers were talking, and took her place in the easy chair by the window as if she had known the company all her life. When her turn came, she fell easily into the general conversation and told us calmly and lucidly what was going on at Queens, who was playing, and who was probably going to win. A remarkable exhibition.

Marshall, of course, is the past master at conducting these easy-going affairs. His friendly urbane manner, his smooth deep voice, and his general air of comfortable solidity fill the most nervous novice with confidence. Only once have I seen him stumped for a couple of seconds. That was in a 'Black Dog' programme when a Major Someone-or-other, who had four strapping great sons in the Army, brought them along to compare conditions in their day and his.

'I expect things are pretty different now from what they were in your day?' prompted Marshall.

The major *nodded.*

Marshall is at his best on 'serious' occasions. His broadcast of the coronation ceremony from behind the altar in Westminster Abbey was superbly done. But I always thought it typical of the conservativeness and lack of daring of the B.B.C. that they should choose the same man to broadcast prize-fights. Marshall is essentially a 'respectable' person—he went to school, he went to the university, he played Rugby football—and professional pugilism is essentially not a 'respectable' business. Marshall could never bring himself to portray the raw and less gentlemanly atmosphere which is the characteristic attraction of big boxing. Still, that is a minor criticism. Marshall has been a great asset to broadcasting.

I always think the B.B.C. were ill served by their earlier boxing commentators, some of whom were almost a caricature of a caricature of the B.B.C. I recall in particular a fight between two well-known heavyweights—say Snooks and Spooks; it would not be fair to identify the occasion—when two frightfully decent and well-educated commentators were performing at the microphone.

'Can't quite see from here,' one of them kept saying. 'Right behind Snooks's seconds. Snooks has just hit Spooks a terrific

right—two fine-lookin' fellers these—or was it Spooks hit Snooks? Can't see from here. Can you see, Basil?' But no, Basil couldn't see either. If they had been journalists, they'd have been sacked on the spot. But they went on for years.

In one sphere the British Broadcasting Corporation stands unchallengeably supreme—its 'outside' broadcasts of big occasions. Its handling of the coronation, the jubilee, the marriage of the Duke of Kent, defied criticism. Though I claim no connection between these events, it so happens that both S. J. de Lotbinière and his successor as controller of outside broadcasts, Michael Standing, were at school with me. Or should I say I was at school with them?

Lotbinière and I struggled with the classics together at the preparatory school of St Cyprians, Eastbourne, whence he went with a scholarship to Eton. His rise was physical as well as practical, and this tawny-haired colossus now stands six feet seven inches. I tip him with confidence to be the director-general of the B.B.C. one day.

At Charterhouse I shared comparative obscurity with Michael Standing, a man who represents as well as any one the new spirit in the B.B.C. A willowy, languid, and quite unruffleable fellow, with a shrewd twinkle behind his spectacles and a lovely sense of humour.

It was some years after they had been relaying running commentaries of football, cricket, ice hockey, and other sports that the B.B.C. turned their attention to golf. They chose as the subject of their first experiment a professional tournament at Little Aston, near Birmingham, and with commendable enterprise rigged up a glass-fronted hut perched precariously on tall stilts, like those native swamp dwellings that you see in the travel films. It overlooked two greens and three tees—a vantage point not to be found on many golf courses.

This early attempt was not unsuccessful. We were lucky in being able to see plenty of play and, in particular, in having a former open champion in the person of Arthur Havers fluff an approach shot right under our noses. That sort of thing is the answer to the commentator's prayer. It lends just that little splash of colour that makes the difference. But, on the whole, I had my doubts as to whether the running commentary was a practical proposition for a game so leisurely as golf.

A year or two later—that is, in the season before the war—the B.B.C. produced an experimental portable transmitter of the kind that had already been in use for some time in the United States, and much interest was aroused during the English championship at Birkdale by the sight of my distinguished colleague, Bernard Darwin, wending his way round the course with a gentleman carrying, strapped on his back, a strange portmanteau-like contraption from which an aerial protruded vertically over his head.

I listened to Darwin's ten-minute relay with professional interest, for I had been invited to do similar broadcasts in the amateur championship at Hoylake a few weeks later. If he, with as ready a flow of the English language as you will find, should be unable to make anything of it, what hope was there for me?

It was soon clear that even he was finding it heavy going, and I was not surprised when he returned to the clubhouse with the verdict that in no circumstances did golf lend itself to this form of broadcasting. Maybe I should have better luck at Hoylake.

When the time came, we had a lovely May morning, the course was crowded, and we attracted much, to me, unwelcome attention with our weird apparatus. One engineer carried the machine, another the batteries, while I grasped the hand-microphone at the end of fifteen feet of cable. The procedure was, I gathered, that my words were to be relayed to the clubhouse (the maximum range of the machine being a mile and a half) where they would then be retransmitted in the usual way. An intricate system of signalling with handkerchiefs was evolved between ourselves and the home engineer on the clubhouse roof.

All this sounds excellent in theory, but in practice I found it pretty well impossible. The principal snag is that in ten minutes you cannot afford any pauses. The narrative must be continuous. Now, assuming that there is a large crowd following the game, as there was at Hoylake, you have to keep right in front, close to the players, if you are to have any view of the play at all. And if you stand close to the players you must be absolutely silent, not only on the stroke, but also while they are preparing for it. You are therefore driven away from the players, the nearest safe range on a calm day being about fifty yards. But at fifty yards' range, unless you are perched on a neighbouring sand-hill or some equally convenient eminence, you can see nothing whatever except the backs of the crowd.

Another serious handicap is that the B.B.C. must necessarily announce the times of these broadcasts many days in advance, and those times may not coincide with any exciting happenings on the golf course. We were due to broadcast for the first time at Hoylake at 11 a.m. on the morning of the quarter-finals.

Establishing myself, with retinue, on a mound overlooking the fourth green, I awaited the coming of A. A. Duncan, the young Welsh army officer, who later reached the final, and one of the Americans, Richard Chapman. We calculated that their match should be somewhere within our view when the clock struck eleven.

At ten to eleven they were coming up the long third hole towards us with a big gallery behind them, and everything seemed to be working according to plan. It seemed we were to be in luck that morning. In fact, the only blot on the landscape from my point of view was the crowd of bystanders that our apparatus had attracted. They peered cautiously at us, edging round us in a circle, and every half-minute or so one of them would pluck up his courage and ask when the performance was to begin.

Well, at four minutes to eleven the players drove from the fourth tee and both landed their shots nicely on the green below us. At three-quarters of a minute to eleven Duncan narrowly missed his two; at a quarter of a minute to eleven Chapman rolled in a lovely putt for a two, and I thought what a pleasing note of authenticity the applause would have produced on the microphone. And at eleven o'clock precisely they were on their way to the far-distant fifth tee, where we had not the remotest hope of following them. The engineer held up a warning hand, while the onlookers licked their lips in anticipation, and a second later the world was informed that Mr Longhurst would give an 'eye-witness account of the British amateur championship now being played at Hoylake.'

Though I am afraid there was rather a lot of the 'lovely day up here—beautiful view across the bay' sort of padding beloved by music-hall imitators of the B.B.C., I carried on pretty respectably, as I like to think, for the longest ten minutes I ever remember. We retired for much-needed refreshment, hoping for better luck at the afternoon performance.

It was not until we reached the clubhouse that we learned that the machine had not functioned properly and that after four minutes I had been faded out 'on account of a technical hitch!'

Nor was that the only embarrassing moment I have suffered at Hoylake. I was broadcasting three times a day during the open championship there in 1936, twice in the empire programme and once in the home news, and we had a microscopic little hut at the back of the clubhouse, wedged in among the guy ropes of a big tea tent. The hut was only the size of a small chicken coop, and there was just room for the engineer and myself to squeeze in. The front was glass and so was the top half of the little door, through which we could see and be seen by the people going in and out of the clubhouse. The microphone hung from the roof in the eighteen inches between myself and the front window.

First of all a whole day had to be abandoned on account of a snowstorm and I had to fill in the three periods telling the world about golf that had not been played. Then one afternoon, when I was in full voice at about 5.15 on one of the empire programmes, a waitress came round the back of the tea tent carrying a vast pile of plates. She tried to step between our box and the ropes. She tripped, and for a second or two it was touch and go. Then, within perhaps four feet of the microphone, she sank with all hands. The plates shattered with a crash that was heard all over the British Empire.

I was able to get away with that by frankly describing what had occurred (I was later told that it was far the most entertaining part of the turn!), but no man could have explained away an incident two or three days afterwards. I was just starting on the familiar tack, 'Well, it 's been a wonderful day up here at Hoylake . . . etc.,' when out of the corner of my eye I spied a couple of friends turning up at the clubhouse door. They peered curiously, nudged each other with grins of delight, and made for our box.

The scene that ensued could hardly have been more embarrassing. My two friends danced up and down outside the box making rude two-fingered gestures, pressing their noses on the window-pane, and behaving generally like small boys provoking a monkey in a cage, while I sat inside trying to reply to their gestures and at the same time, without a change of intonation, inform the world that Alfred Padgham had again gone round in seventy-one. An uneasy moment.

Ever heard your own voice? It 's a creepy, uncanny feeling, in a way. And if my own experience is any criterion you 'd be astonished at yourself.

Richard Burton won the open championship at St Andrews a month or two before the war. I could not stay to say my piece in person after the nine o'clock news. Instead it was recorded at 7.15, and half an hour later I left in a friend's car for Gleneagles. We tuned in the radio at half-past nine and, as we made our way across Scotland, heard the announcer informing listeners that Mr Longhurst was 'unable to come to the microphone in person' —a dubious touch, this, we thought—'but here are his recorded impressions of the day's play.'

A second's pause and then—the Voice.

In a dozen, perhaps a hundred, guesses I should never have identified it. I smirked with pleasure. The voice was deep and resonant and clear.

'Do I really sound like that?' I asked my companion.

'Good Lord, no,' he said. 'Nothing like it. You 've a much higher pitch than that.'

Such is life.

SIC TRANSIT GLORIA . . .

It was ten o'clock on a lovely October morning and the scene was Westward Ho! some years ago. The flat expanse between the golf clubhouse and the sea, which they call the 'burrows,' was shimmering in the sunshine, and red sails glided along above the level of the sandhills as the sailing barges and fishing boats made their way into the little harbour at Appledore. The world was at peace.

On the first tee down below the clubhouse a small group of people were waiting. Many were women, for the English women's championship was just beginning, but among them was a goodly sprinkling of men. Of the men, those that weren't caddies were golf journalists.

Golf journalists on the first tee at ten in the morning? Yes, indeed. Every one of them. And what had lured them forth at this unaccustomed hour? Why, the rumour had gone round the village that at ten o'clock that day a lady intended to play golf in trousers.

One or two even went so far as to suggest that not only did she play in trousers but that she only used one club. This was ruled

out as an unworthy attempt to paint the lily. Trousers, yes; or one club, yes. But trousers and one club—come, come, sir!

No one you meet has ever seen a ghost; on the other hand, there's no one who doesn't know someone who has. So it was with the mysterious lady. No one had seen her, but every one had it first-hand from someone who had.

Ten o'clock came, and no apparition. The name was called once. No reply. It was called again. No reply. The know-alls wagged their heads with a chorus of 'I told you so,' and were retiring to the clubhouse for refreshment, when along the little lane that crosses the links a couple of hundred yards from the first tee there appeared a big yellow motor car.

The car stopped, and out into the headlines stepped Miss Gloria Minoprio.

The deserters hastily retraced their steps from the bar, while among the ladies in waiting arose a clucking and fluttering as of an agitated flock of Leghorn pullets.

'My *dear*, do you see what I see?' . . . 'What a figure!' . . . 'What trousers!'

'Well, *really*!' cried the Ladies' Golf Union.

'Good God!' said the journalists.

Meanwhile, the object of their astonishment made her way composedly and with what dignity her costume would permit across to the waiting crowd.

She was clad from head to foot in dark blue, and, yes, she wore trousers. Close-fitting, exquisitely tailored trousers, very tightly cut, especially—er—behind. She wore them, as did our grandfathers, with straps beneath the insteps of her blue suède shoes. A neat blue jacket and a little blue turban completed the streamline.

A slim, graceful girl, with delicate, sensitive features and figure divine. She had bumps, to quote Mr Damon Runyan's rudely graphic description, where a doll is entitled to have bumps. Only one thing marred the picture. On her cheeks should have glowed the rosy bloom of youth and health. Instead, they were heavily, almost grotesquely, powdered in white. She might have been wearing a white mask.

With her was a young caddie carrying, rather sheepishly, a scarlet spare jacket, a ball bag, and—not one club, but two. But rumour had spoken truth, and she only used one of these clubs. The other was a spare in case of accident.

She said 'How do you do?' almost inaudibly to her opponent,

At the end of the match she said 'Thank you.' So far as I am aware that was all she did say.

Tapping the ground with her solitary cleek to show the caddie where she wished him to tee the ball, she prepared to play her opening stroke. It must have been something of an ordeal. If so, she certainly showed no sign of it.

She had, it turned out, a careful, precise style of play that might have been learned studiously from the text-book. Nothing very dashing about it, no undignified vigour, but quite efficient. She did not hit the ball very far—no woman does with an iron club—but she hit it for the most part nice and straight.

That morning the champions played in solitude, their supporters lured away by magnetic Minoprio. I forget the name of her opponent, but there was no doubt as to which was the more nervous of the two. The prospect of losing to a lady in fancy dress using only one club is enough to shake the stoutest heart. Might take a lifetime to live down.

Recovering from their initial shock, those of the quickly gathering 'gallery' who were interested in the technique of golf settled down to assess Miss Minoprio's capabilities with her solitary club. They proved to be considerable. Her long game was steady and, though the long shaft of her iron made her look rather clumsy, her putting was at least up to the average usually seen in a women's championship. Her approaches, low along the ground, were quite effective.

But the time came, inevitably, when she was faced with strokes beyond the capacity of Bobby Jones, Cotton, or the devil himself, to execute with a straight-faced iron. She could not loft the ball, except in a full shot; she could impart no 'stop' or back spin; she could get no distance from anything but a smooth, clipped lie. To lob the ball over an intervening hazard was beyond her.

There was much speculation as to what would occur when she got into a bunker. The truth is that it is quite simple to remove the ball from a bunker with any kind of club if the sand is soft and loose. Hit hard, three or four inches behind it, and the deed is done. So in the fine seaside sand of Westward Ho! Miss Minoprio performed with no little distinction, and some who had come to mock remained to marvel. But on firm or rain-sodden sand, or, indeed, on any hard surface, she was pathetically powerless.

That her average score would have been reduced by anything

from half a dozen to ten shots in a round by the use of a normal set of clubs, no reasonable critic could doubt. She went through the motions well enough. But the instrument she used was too ill adapted for the purpose. She lost her match by, I think, five and four, and I was able to telephone to the *Evening Standard* what I believed to be almost the only Latin tag to find its way into the sporting pages of that journal prior to the advent of Commander C. B. Fry—'Sic transit Gloria Monday.' (I repeated it shamelessly for five years with only one variation. One year she defeated a young girl who was so nervous that she could scarcely focus the ball. So the tag became 'Sic transit Gloria Tuesday.')

The yellow car had been driven across the 'burrows' and was waiting near by. She stepped in and was whisked away, not to appear in public again until the next women's championship, and the company settled down to debate her reason for imposing upon herself the ludicrous handicap of playing with one club.

One school of thought held that she was doing it for publicity. Certainly her unusual attire lent weight to that opinion. If so she certainly succeeded, for her name and picture have featured in almost every newspaper every time she has appeared in a championship. But those who seek publicity like inevitably to bask in it when achieved. Miss Minoprio, so far as I know, has never entered a golf clubhouse during a championship; has never played in a tournament other than the two championships; has never made friends with other golfers.

And again, why the extraordinary outfit—admirable though it may be for golfing comfort? And why the mask-like countenance? Here a very strong school exists which holds that she plays golf while temporarily hypnotized, or entranced, either by auto-suggestion or by a friend. That is possible. And if she is not in a state of semi-hypnosis, that at least is as good a description as any of her appearance and demeanour.

She spent some months studying yoga in India (and incidentally she is a conjurer of the highest order, though the point is hardly relevant). After her début at Westward Ho ! she wrote to tell me she had bought thirty copies of the *Tatler*, in which I had written about her, to distribute to her friends. We exchanged three or four letters. Later, while walking round in a championship, I introduced myself as her correspondent. She blinked with surprise at being spoken to. She had the vacant, far-away look of Lady Macbeth walking in her sleep. She seemed scarcely

to understand what I was trying to say. 'Oh, yes . . . yes,' she said, looking vaguely into the distance over my shoulder. I faded away.

The Ladies' Golf Union, aghast at her first appearance, issued a proclamation that they 'deplored any departure from the traditional costume of the game,' but the last laugh was against them. Nearly half the field in women's championships to-day turn out in trousers.

But none of them fit like Gloria Minoprio's.

PRE-WAR PLAYGROUND

FUNNY how a few casual remarks can lead to false impressions that may last a lifetime. . . . It was the custom of the head master of my preparatory school to take parties of boys to the winter sports each year. When they met again in the following term they naturally talked over the times they had. From these conversations I developed a deep, instinctive dislike of winter sports and all they appeared to stand for. Their talk was of 'tests' and 'trials,' as though skiing and such like were examinations. So-and-so, I would hear, was 'awfully good. He 's almost certain to pass his second class next season.' I was small for my age—my legs weren't long enough even to get me over a high hurdle—and the idea of these athletic examinations in the snow repelled me. What a way to spend the holidays!

Small boys are highly sensitive to ridicule, and I could hear the laughter ringing across the slopes as I floundered on my short legs in the snow. I could see myself hanging my head in shame at failing to pass the beginner's test. No, sir! I 'd rather spend my precious vacation floundering in the mud of rural Bedfordshire.

And so it was not until I was twenty-nine that I was persuaded, still rather sceptical, to venture to Switzerland in winter. But when I stood in that glistening snow and saw men hurl themselves down the mountain-side, twisting and turning with the abandon of swallows on the wing, I knew that skiing was something higher than a sport. Here was the poetry of human movement, the pinnacle of sheer physical rapture, beside which all common sports were trivial. And I knew, too, that because

of those false impressions I had gained as a boy, the best skiing years of my own life were over before they had begun. I would have given a thousand pounds (payable by instalments) to regain them.

How utterly infuriating is the traditional reticence of the Englishman! I found that I had numerous friends who had been first-class skiers for years. Why had none of them bothered to tell me that here was the most exhilarating pastime in the world? When I came home I spread abroad to every one I met the gospel of the snows.

'You 're telling me!' they 'd sometimes reply. 'Why, I haven't missed a season for ten years.'

'Then why on earth didn't *you* tell me?' I would answer.

It was General Critchley who opened this new world to me, two years before the war. He had taken a villa at St Moritz, and would I come along? No, I didn't have to be able to ski; there were others in the party who would be novices, too. No, I should certainly not be asked to undertake any tests, trials, or examinations. And if I didn't take to skiing, I could skate, or ride the Bob run or the Cresta, or amuse myself with a hundred and one other things.

I think it was the Cresta that decided it. The fame of the Cresta toboggan run has spread all over the world, and those who ride it for their own amusement have taken on the pseudo-heroic quality of men who ride the 'Wall of Death' to earn their daily bread. I wanted badly to try the Cresta.

The journey to the winter sports is in itself something of an institution. I remember the thrill with which I observed on the platform in Paris a woman already attired in clumping great ski boots and trousers—and the board below the window of my sleeper, which read like an atlas: 'Paris—Strasburg—München—Wien—Budapest—Beograd—Sofia—Istanbul.' Any man who in his youth had the healthy ambition to be an engine driver must respond to the romance of a train that roars through the night to all these unlikely places.

There are few more exquisite moments than that of opening the window of one's sleeper in the morning and finding, instead of the grimy suburbs of London or Paris, a new world of freshness and sunshine. Most English travellers, I suppose, would hold that that moment reaches its zenith when they first behold the blue waters of the Mediterranean. For myself I love the hills and heather and the silver birches and the trout streams of

the Highlands. But they are all as nothing beside that white, mountainous fairyland that greets the winter traveller to Switzerland.

If you are bound for St Moritz you change in the early morning at a little wayside place called Chur (unaccountably pronounced 'Hwar'), and then settle down for a long two and a half hours' pull uphill through the mountains. A wonderful feat of engineering is this single track, winding its way up through the hills and valleys, crossing chasms on tall arches and diving into rock tunnels on the other side. The whole thing might have come straight from the second bible of my childhood, *Railway Wonders of the World.*

St Moritz itself turned out to be a simple little town on a steep slope overlooking a lake, which at that time, of course, was frozen stiff like a big white meadow. All around it were the great mountains among whose snowy summits lay the expert skier's paradise. Straining the eyes in astonishment one could detect them as tiny black specks moving silently against their high white background.

Lower down a couple of preposterously large hotels dominate the scene. The narrow streets, most of them 'one-way,' zigzag diagonally up the hillside, and wheels, except on a few motor cars with clanking chains, soon become a thing of the past. The rest of the world moves on sleighs, sledges, toboggans, skis—anything that will slide.

The taxi from the station impressed me immensely. It was a big sleigh, drawn by a sturdy horse with bells and a crest of plumes. Sitting in the back, wrapped in furs, I remember fancying myself as something out of a recent film of the Garbo's.

Other first impressions were favourable, too. The number of garments recommended to the novice by experts as being indispensable for winter sports run into a matter of fifty pounds or so. I had confined myself to borrowing a ski suit and buying a couple of pairs of boots, some ski socks, and some skates. I arrived in fear and trembling lest I should be wearing the wrong thing. But it was clear at a glance that no garment that man could design, drunk or sober, could be wrong among the motley assembly parading the streets of St Moritz.

Fat men and thin men; fine, bronzed men, and pale unhealthy-looking new-comers like myself; women of every size and contour. No shape was wrong, no colour was wrong, no combination was wrong.

The place was filled (this was in late December) not with London's society and its hangers-on, but with Germans, Austrians, and French. English and Americans seemed comparatively rare. I asked a hotel proprietor about this. 'It 's all right,' he said, rubbing his hands, 'they 'll be coming soon!'

The thrill of taking to skis (I was taught to call them skees, by the way, not shees) for the first time was comparable, in my own experience, only with that of the maiden outing on one's first new bicycle at the age of eight. Standing at the roadside beside the nursery slopes, which in summer are part of the St Moritz golf course, I bent down and put on my right ski. The left ski at once made off down the road towards Samaden, and was retrieved by a courteous Austrian.

I clambered laboriously up a small slope on my gleaming new seven-foot boards with their razor-like steel edges, as worn by the experts, and turned to pause for a moment before launching into the great adventure. The place was crowded with beginners and instructors, and I waited until no one was looking. Then I turned the boards downwards, and away we went. The descent, a matter of perhaps fifteen yards, went, as they say of the executions, 'without a hitch.' The game was easier than I had thought.

Next time I clambered considerably higher and set off again with a lively confidence. I had gone a few yards when for no reason at all the world slipped from under my feet, spun round, and disappeared. My skis were at right angles, my head was buried in a snowdrift, I was unable to rise without assistance.

Later there arrived a man, for whom we soon developed a whole-hearted admiration, whom at times we could willingly have slain. He was a professional instructor, bronzed and handsome, and his name was Mingo Boz (pronounced, and hereafter written, Botz). He became schoolmaster-cum-sergeant-major-cum-nursemaid to our party.

To the non-athletic town dweller the basic movements of skiing are at first impossible. If you doubt these words, try an experiment and you will see what I mean. Place your feet very wide apart: turn your toes sharply inward, get on to the inside edge of each foot, and now push hard outwards with your heels. It isn't on. But until you can do that, you can't make the basic elementary 'stem turn' —nor, what is worse, can you 'put on the brake.'

Botz would demonstrate this movement time and again with infuriating precision. Choosing a beaten-down slope as steep as the side of a house, he would glide down it at a snail's pace, screwing from side to side with his skis in an inverted V. 'I poosh with my right, and I turn . . . I poosh with my left, and I turn. . . . It is easy, yes?' The answer was No. We christened our tormentor The Abominable Snowman.

In every form of movement with the exception of skiing—running, walking, bicycling, flying, anything you like—if you wish to turn to the left, you lean inwards to the left. On skis you must lean outwards to the right, so as to throw the weight on the guiding ski. And on the side of a precipice every human instinct leads you to lean sharply inwards to the left, close to Mother Earth, rather than outwards with your head suspended, as it seems, in space.

But until you master this movement you are done, for the only means by which a novice may descend a sharp slope (other than by pointing the skis directly at the hotel bar some thousands of feet below and hoping for the best) is by a series of diagonal 'traverses.' These in themselves are easy enough. It 's the almost complete turn from one to the other that does the damage. For one ghastly moment the boards to which one is attached point directly downwards and, for all one's efforts at 'stemming,' 'braking,' and 'pooshing with the right,' begin to gather speed at an alarming rate. Hold on for that horrible second or two and you have mastered the psychological moment of all skiing. But it 's easier to write. . . .

The acme of skiing ecstasy comes from the 'schuss,' or direct downhill dash. I remember lying panting and prostrate on a vicious incline high above the town one morning, realizing that I 'd no business to be up there in any case, and wondering how the hell I was going to get down, when over the crest above my head came half a dozen figures hard on each other's heels, wearing common cloth caps, which I later discovered to be the hall-mark of the ace skier. It had not entered my head that any living man could descend this precipice 'straight.' On the other hand, I don't think it occurred to any one of these men to do otherwise. As they flashed past me, their bodies were actually horizontal; in other words, so steep was the slope that if the ground had been flat, they would now have been lying on their stomachs. They were travelling at approximately forty-five miles per hour. They disappeared over the brow at

the bottom where the ground sloped off almost vertically and so far as I could see, they took that 'straight' too. The leading figure, I learned, was Rominger, champion of Switzerland.

I remember reflecting, as I lay inert in the snow, that these peasant lads who come tearing down the mountain have something that we dwellers in the big cities will never know. Their exuberant health and vigour and their extraordinary sense of balance make a mockery of us citizens of the fog and grime, with our 'daily dozens' and our chasing after squash balls and our pathetic little 'Fitness Campaigns.' I almost resolved to go on the water wagon.

On the other hand, I did once or twice feel the sweet satisfaction of turning nimbly on the mountain-side, and I did experience the unique exhilaration of the 'schuss.' It lasted, I suppose, for about a hundred yards and I may have reached a speed of twenty-five miles an hour. The wind got into my goggles and I could not see, my skis seemed scarcely to be touching the snow, and I knew that this was a moment that nothing would ever erase from my memory. I resolved to let nature take its course. In a few brief seconds a hidden gully took the legs from under me and that was the end of that.

Botz, now in the early thirties, had skied, in his day, in the Olympic Games for Switzerland. He had a consciously elegant style on the boards and lost no opportunity of showing it off to the company. One day, at the top of a longish slope, one of the girls twisted her ankle, or said she did, and Botz, picking her up dramatically in his arms, carried her to the bottom, weaving his way in and out among the other skiers, earning gasps of admiration from the novices and infuriated sneers from the other instructors, any one of whom would have given a sovereign at that moment to have found one of his own pupils in a similar predicament.

Every day from December till March Botz used to start at eight in the morning and finish when it was almost too dark to pick a prostrate pupil out of a snowdrift. I used to meet him in the evenings, when the day's work was done, for a glass of the local firewater, known as 'grappa,' and get him talking. I was contributing a daily series of light articles to the *Evening Standard* on winter sports from the novice's angle, and found him a fund of useful material.

He had taught people of twelve nationalities, he told me, including an Indian maharajah and Mr Charles Chaplin.

Strangely enough, he found the Irish, the English, and the Germans the quickest learners, though in different ways. The Germans liked everything cut and dried. They liked to learn to ski by numbers, as though they were being drilled. They would!

'When I say "Come at ten o'clock," they come at ten,' he said. 'The French come at eleven.'

He liked the Irish and the English, he added, because they were not afraid—'but they always want to go to the top of the mountain the first day they arrive, and so they are more dangerous than any. That is why they always hurt themselves. There are more English hurt themselves than all the rest together.

'And they are so unsympathetic. The other day I see an Englishman—not one of my pupils, of course—and 'e break 'is leg. His friends come round and all they say is "Ha, ha, 'e 'as broken 'is leg." '

Of all the inventions of the devil, few, to the uninitiated, can equal the apparatus known as a ski-lift. It was, in fact, invented by man to save himself the trouble of climbing mountains, and consists of a series of sort of anchors, hanging at intervals of about forty yards from a moving overhead wire which climbs on pylons up the mountain-side.

The anchors emerge, clanking, rom a kind of engine-house at the bottom, and are seized by the man in charge and hitched hastily under the posterior of the waiting victim, whom they then haul fitfully to the summit. They are attached to the overhead wire by springs and the art is to lean back against them and be dragged passively along. Lose contact with your anchor for a second and you will find it forty feet out of reach over your head, dancing fiendishly and uttering weird, twanging sounds of contempt. Try sitting on it and it will collapse limply to the ground, wriggle from under you, and again fly skywards.

Towards the summit of the St Moritz ski-lift is an almost vertical stretch of a hundred yards or so. Clutching feverishly to my anchor I had almost reached the top and the fellow in front was already out of sight over the brow. It was the *moment critique*. On this occasion it was also the moment at which the machinery elected to stop, leaving a half-mile series of figures impotent and motionless on the mountain-side.

After the longest and loneliest three minutes I remember, the apparatus clanked into action again and yanked me over

the brow. We stopped to restore our morale with coffee and brandy in the little hut at the top, and I think the very first thing I saw was a kind of wire cage, like the old-fashioned rat traps, hanging from the wall. It was shaped like a human leg.

'That?' they said. 'Oh, that 's for when you break your leg going down.'

The physical strain imposed on the legs of the ace skier is to me fantastic. Lean out of the window of a railway train clattering through a station at fifty miles an hour and imagine casting yourself violently downhill at this speed, shock-absorbing every bump and cavity with your own two legs, and you will realize something of what I mean. Are such speeds perhaps an exaggeration? Not at all. A friend of mine, Donald Garrow, who captained the Oxford University skiers, over a course of a mile and a quarter in Norway *averaged* forty-eight and a half miles per hour—and finished tenth.

Women skiers can almost match the men in perfection of technique, if not in performance and stamina. I am informed that, in company with female stars of the tennis courts, the hunting field, and other spheres of sporting activity, they are inclined to become a trifle hard-bitten, but that is none of my business. I do know that a good-looking girl who can really ski is a joy to the eye.

The best woman skier I have been privileged to see at close quarters is Audrey Sale Barker, who was one of our party at St Moritz. She was so good that she would actually ski in a skirt—a practice to be ventured only by those possessed of shapely legs and the surefootedness of a chamois—and a very delectable sight she was, I remember, careering down the mountain with her skirt twisting and billowing around her. I may add for the benefit of the sartorially curious that under it she wore long black tights.

From what I saw, and in an infinitesimal degree experienced for myself, I came to class skiing as the greatest of all sports, matched only by motor road racing.

It demands almost all of the nobler human qualities—tremendous endurance, balance, poise, and a physical courage undreamed of by players of mere ball games. And the sense of individual exhilaration it inspires is unique.

One day we went across the valley to the Olympic ski-jump, and a more staggering exhibition of cold-blooded nerve and skill

I never did see. Though I could, by a severe stretch of imagination, conceive myself hurtling down the mountain with the surefootedness of Mr Rominger, I knew at a glance that only in the wildest state of intoxication should I ever, at any age, have cast myself into space as the young fellows were doing from this ski-jump.

The jump consists of an artificial runway, perhaps forty yards long, which levels out at the bottom and then curves very slightly upward. Below is a bigger slope, tremendously steep, on which the jumper pitches. If he pitched on the flat, he would break every bone in his body.

Away up at the top is a tiny black figure, balancing with his skis horizontal to the slope. Down goes the red flag, and the figure leaps round and dashes pell-mell down the incline, heaving with his body to increase his momentum.

As he reaches the bottom he hurls himself into space, hauling himself through the air with his arms. Down and down he goes until at last his skis hit the next precipitous slope with a thud and he either falls in a tangled, slithering jumble of skis and humanity, or swishes downward at seventy miles an hour to pull up in a shower of snow just short of the spectators. Phew!

The great art, I am told, is to time one's leap about ten yards before the actual take-off. Do it right, and you hit the snow with the heels of your skis. Do it wrong, either too far back or too far forward, and you hit the snow with your person, at not less than fifty miles an hour.

The record on the St Moritz jump is about seventy-five yards —but figures are cold, unemotional things. Perhaps it will bring it home better if I remind you that this means jumping downwards through space for substantially farther than the average distance between two telegraph poles. No wonder they told me a ski-jumper is 'too old at twenty-six.'

One of the boys who jumped sixty-three yards on the day in question was only sixteen. Two who tied for the tournament were little older. To show there was no ill feeling they went back to the top and came down hand in hand. They pitched side by side fifty-eight yards lower down.

All available practice jumps are child's play beside the Olympic jump, and I remarked to a young Swiss in the town, whom I had seen performing, that the first jump from the big one must be an alarming experience. To a student of the psychology of sport his reply was enlightening. 'It is not the first jump that

matters,' he said. 'But if you fall on your first jump, that makes the second jump very, very difficult.'

It took me a long time to discover what it was that made ski-jumping such an awe-inspiring spectacle. There are, after all, plenty of more dangerous sports—motor, motor-boat, and motor-bicycle racing, high-speed flying, and the rest—but I found the secret in the end. It was simply that ski-jumping is the most hair-raising performance indulged in by man *without the aid of a machine.*

As for the Cresta and the Bob, I found them, strangely, a mixture of the bogus and the sublime.

Any one who imagines them as a kind of glorified tobogganing is due for a sharp disillusionment. They bear no relation, in sensation, to the Englishman's conception of tobogganing as practised from time to time in England. A much closer parallel is motor racing.

I had my baptism on the back seat of a two-man Bob, and right glad I was to have had it before essaying the Cresta, which you ride alone on what 's known as a 'skeleton.' The Bob is a contraption resembling a motor car chassis, guided by a steering wheel and weighing about twenty five stone—or rather more than Lord Castlerosse.

The track winds its way down through the forest in a series of banked bends, some of them complete hairpins, and the first surprise is that its surface is not snow, but ice. So the steel runners, instead of making the swishing sound of a toboggan on snow, make a rumbling, roaring noise like a brewer's dray on a cobbled street. On our first descent I can record with honesty that I was not frightened, for the very good reason that there was no time to be.

The thing rattled down at an unconscionable speed. Trees loomed up beside the track and in a split second flashed by, and no sooner had one recovered from the sensation of sitting in a horizontal position high up on an almost vertical banking than one had thundered on to the next bend and was doing the same thing in reverse order. We dived at last into the finishing straight at substantially more than a mile a minute and pulled up in a shower of ice as I applied the brakes at the back. One minute, eleven seconds. Terrible. On all sides they were complaining that the track had never been so slow.

Next morning—the Cresta. At the risk of boring the tiny

minority who have ridden the track for themselves, let me describe the scene. It is early in the morning—early, that is, if you have not got to bed until four. You can only ride the Cresta from half-past eight till the sun comes over the mountains at about eleven and softens the ice.

You join the little knot of silent folk at the top of the run, write your name down on the list of starters, and set about equipping yourself for the fray. The equipment consists of special boots with metal 'rakes' sprouting from the toes, for retarding progress where necessary, metal knee-, elbow-, and knuckle-protectors, and a crash helmet (compulsory). You finish by resembling an ice hockey goal-minder.

Your toboggan has a little sliding seat and steel runners, which are smooth except for a few inches at the back where they are grooved. The idea is that at the corners you slide the seat back, clasping the front of the toboggan with the top hand and the back of it with the lower hand. The weight is thus thrust back on to the grooves at the back of the runners, enabling you to get a grip on the ice and push the nose of the machine down with the top hand.

Or not, as the case may be.

The run itself is about the width of a narrow-gauge railway and the straight stretches are enclosed by two-foot walls of solid frozen snow. The corners are, of course, banked almost to the vertical and each has its name—Bank, Stream, Battledore, Shuttlecock, and so on. The length in all is 1,320 yards, and the all-time record is held by an old friend of mine, Billy Fiske, who shot down in 56·7 seconds.

The same Billy Fiske, I have to add with sorrow, who gave his life for Britain in an air battle over the Channel.

Humorous, tough, good-natured, and American, Fiske had a great eye for speed, which I came to appreciate when we were at Cambridge together. He possessed a monstrous motor car in which he used to drive us out to play golf, and we reckoned it a poor journey if we didn't touch the hundred-mile-per-hour mark at least twice on the way to Mildenhall.

My vividest memory of this energetic little man concerns an episode on the Great North Road, when the driver of a very ancient bus drew slowly across our path without warning. We skidded a matter of eighty-eight yards on a dry road, turning three complete circles, and finishing with the back wheels among the spring seeds in a lady's front garden.

Fiske was the best driver of a motor car with whom I ever drove—but on the golf course he was money for old rope. He could play well enough on occasions to turn out for the university, but the physical effort of driving his monster to Mildenhall left his hands and wrists so jumpy that for the first six holes he played like a twenty-four handicap beginner, and by that time the damage was done. It used to make him very cross sometimes. He never seemed to grasp the essential point that you cannot hold a motor car at a hundred miles an hour one minute and then hole a curly six-footer on a slippery green the next.

Fiske had crammed much experience into his life. Soon after leaving Cambridge, he set off round the world and landed at some enchanted island in the Southern Seas, where he meant to stay for three weeks. He stayed six months, bought himself a strip of land, and talked of the day when he could retire to live there. No satisfaction in all his life, he once told me, equalled that of spearing his first fish under water. He was taken out daily for weeks by the natives before he succeeded in doing it. Still, that is a digression. We were talking of the more artificial atmosphere of pre-war St Moritz.

Before leaving for St Moritz I had discovered two schools of thought regarding the Cresta. The one maintained that to go near it was equivalent to suicide, and that, in any case, I should never have the nerve. The other pooh-poohed the whole affair, holding that, after all, it was only tobogganing. As I stood stamping my feet in the snow on my first morning, I wished that some of the latter gentlemen could have been there in person, with their names next on the list.

The weird outfit, emphasizing the need for protection against violent injury or even death; the sight of successive riders flashing out of sight round Shuttlecock half a dozen inches from the rim of the banking, and the cries of 'He 's over! . . . No, he 's not!'; the experienced hands reminiscing of the time when old So-and-so went over the top at such-and-such a corner and broke five ribs; the kindly advice to take especial care first time down or you 've only yourself to blame . . .; these and the chill of the sunless early morning must fill the least imaginative novice with apprehension.

'If you go over the edge,' they add, 'at all costs heave the toboggan away and prevent it pitching on top of you.' Every comment, every item of earnest last-minute advice seems calculated to emphasize the element of bodily danger.

We were using a course of about a thousand yards, starting from a point known as Junction, the last three hundred yards of the track being not yet completed, and the record to date was 47·9 seconds. My turn came at last. 'We don't mind if you take a minute and a quarter,' were the last words I heard, 'only, for God's sake, be careful!' Frankly, I was more interested than frightened. But I don't say what my feelings would have been if I had not had a couple of runs on the Bob on the previous day.

'The next rider,' said the voice of Colonel Hodgson at the microphone, 'is Mr Longhurst.' The moment had come.

I cast myself on to my little steel craft and made off down the ice rut, wondering where the hell I should be in a minute's time. For the first few yards it was difficult to keep the thing from ricocheting from one wall to the other.

Then we really got going, and the next few seconds remain a confused memory of wrestling with a toboggan that seemed to have come to life with only one ambition, to wriggle away from under me. We shot together up the first banking and round, right-handed, on to Battledore.

'Get off Battledore as quick as you can,' they had told me, but there was no time to think about that. I shot off it, down into the gully, and was tossed, like a cork on the ocean wave, on to the left-handed banking of Shuttlecock. Raking desperately with the left foot I managed somehow to get round, and after one more bend found myself emerging into the long straight that leads down under the main road and the railway.

This time I was able to avoid bumping the walls and the speed increased, I suppose, to sixty or seventy miles an hour. A wild, exhilarating sensation. I should not have cared if it had reached a hundred. I wondered if I ought to be raking in readiness for the big banking I could see at the bottom, but decided to let it rip. Why lose a second of such ecstasy?

I got round the bend, too high to be comfortable, and retain a confused impression of rounding a series of others before diving into the finishing straight where the experts touch eighty miles per hour. Yet of all the crowded sensations experienced on that first run, I remember most clearly the one that came immediately after the finish. The rider has no hope, of course, of pulling up for himself at that speed, so they construct a vast embankment to assist him, so steep that it would be quite impossible to remain on it stationary. As you hit this embankment it is as though

some invisible giant had put his hand beneath your stomach and heaved you into the air. And even after eighty yards of it you have to rake hard to pull up.

I had come down with no serious hitch and waited anxiously for the voice to announce my time. 'Fifty-seven seconds.' Congratulations all round. Best time of the year for a novice. The thing was dead easy.

The next run was better, fifty-four seconds, and, inflated by this minor triumph, I was taken in hand by the president, Harry Hays Morgan. 'I 'm going to find you a faster toboggan,' he said. 'Believe me, it will make all the difference.' He retired to the hut and unearthed a shiny green 'skeleton,' sleek and streamlined.

Determined to do credit to my mentor and at the same time break all known records, I waited my turn and set off again. But, alas, the new craft took unkindly to its new master—if 'master' is not an overstatement—and bucked and slithered and wriggled and ducked to get rid of me. We remained together round Battledore and were bumping and rattling our way round Shuttlecock, when of a sudden a strange unearthly silence held the air. Gracefully and with the greatest of ease, the Cresta, I, and Mr Hays Morgan's beautiful toboggan parted company.

At the starter's box the bell tolled twice to signify disaster, and the voice announced: 'I am afraid Mr Longhurst has gone over the top at Shuttlecock.' After flying through the air for what seemed eternity I pitched on my back, in a shower of snow, ice, small stones and what not, in the straw providentially provided at that point.

Remembering the secretary's instructions, I stood up in the straw, like Ruth amid the alien corn, and waved my arms to signify that I was unhurt. Retrieving the toboggan, I trudged ingloriously to the summit. Maybe I was not so hot, after all.

'One thing about winter sports—you always feel fine in the morning. No matter what you drink or how late you go to bed the night before, you always feel fine in the morning.' You must have heard that line a hundred times. Whether it was invented by the guilty conscience of Englishmen celebrating the absence of licensing restrictions or, more likely, by the astute publicity gentlemen in the Swiss tourist bureaux, I cannot say. So far as I personally am concerned, it 's a lie.

After a four-o'clock session in the hubbub, the cigarette haze,

and the steam heat of the Palace Hotel at St Moritz, I have emerged in the morning feeling *awful*.

But in the Cresta St Moritz possesses the one certain, infallible, guaranteed cure for a hangover, beside which all chemists' pick-me-ups, cold douches, prairie oysters, and patent remedies are as child's play. Totter down there in the morning and launch forth semi-conscious on your toboggan. For one minute you will be bumped and rattled and shaken and tossed, sometimes at seventy miles an hour and always with your nose no more than six inches from the ice. In the early stages, thoughts of 'Death, where is thy sting?' may run through your head—but when you pull up at the bottom that head will be as clear as a Quaker's.

The thrill of riding the Cresta or the Bob for the first few times is quite unforgettable—like nothing else on this earth. While the Cresta is the more heavily dramatized, the Bob is, in fact, the more dangerous. When you are sitting upright with a steel wheel in front of you, a crash at fifty miles an hour or more, a. over t. into the forest with, maybe, the Bob on top of you, is no laughing matter. Many a man has been killed that way. Indeed, it was only by the grace of God that Walter Wilson, now wing-commander, survived when incautious enough to come down behind me.

They had just opened the run from the top, and it included, for the first time that season, the famous Sunny Corner. Men had been at work for the past week or so, building up this great bowl-shaped hairpin bend (both the Bob and the Cresta, of course, have to be built afresh each year), but something had gone wrong with their calculations. Every one was complaining of Sunny Corner. Even a couple of world aces, with Olympic flags on their crash helmets, had almost come to grief thereon and had returned on the lorry to the top, fuming with indignation.

'Get down off the banking as quickly as you can' was the general advice still ringing in our ears as Walter and I launched ourselves on our maiden voyage. Sunny Corner whisked into view in the forest below us, lined with gaping spectators thirsting for a crash. We rattled our way round it, horizontal on the banking, and all would have been well had I not recalled the kindly advice of the folk at the top and twisted the wheel to bring us prematurely off the banking. We hit the inside wall of the narrow outlet with a sickly thud and the whole outfit capsized like an errand-boy's bicycle clattering from the kerb and discharging the groceries in the gutter.

Walter pitched on pretty well the only unprotected part of his person—his chin—and was stunned. I was thrown off on my back and slid forty frictionless yards down the track with my legs in the air. I recovered myself just in time to prevent the Bob running over the prostrate Walter.

The next half-hour was a nightmare. We drove home together in a sleigh. 'What happened?' said Walter vaguely.

'Oh,' I replied in the mock-hearty manner one adopts to persons who are not quite themselves, 'we had a bit of an accident. Came off at Sunny Corner, you know.'

'Was anybody with us?'

'No. Only you and me.'

'Oh. Well, what happened?'

'We had an accident. Came off at Sunny Corner.'

'Did we? Was anybody with us?'

'No. Just you and me.'

'Who was steering?'

' I was.'

'What was I doing?'

'You were braking.'

'Oh, I see. And who else was with us?'

I had visions of Walter losing his memory, never being the same man again, and so on. My conscience felt horribly guilty, and the fact that they closed down the track for a couple of days while they reshaped Sunny Corner did little to help matters. It is with a still lively sense of relief that I record that Walter Wilson not only recovered in a week or two but actually intimated to me this year that, given the opportunity, he 'd trust me as his chauffeur again.

Incidentally Critch was more nearly killed on the Bob than any one that year. Someone had run into one of the side walls half-way down and the track had had to be closed for the day. Critch, with his son John, was standing in the track examining the damage when from above them in the forest he heard a rumbling noise that sounded suspiciously like a Bob on its way down. With a yell of 'Jump for it,' he scrambled up the wall, and had just got his legs over the top when a Bob roared by within a few feet of him. Two seconds earlier and it would have nipped off his legs like matchsticks—and left a nice vacancy at the White City.

It was a couple of workmen taking a short cut down to Samaden.

Having been at pains to describe the unique fascination of

riding the Cresta and the Bob, why should I have begun by calling them a mixture of the bogus and the sublime? The answer is that while the sensations they inspire are sublime, some of the people they attract are, well, far from it.

The death-or-glory boys, and in the case of the Bob, the death-or-glory girls as well, are apt to be a tiresome crew. Resplendent in their beflagged crash helmets, they conduct themselves with a fairly ludicrous air of mock-heroic '*Nos morituri* . . .' The Bob, certainly, has an ever-present element of physical danger, but in a couple of runs any man with a reasonably clear eye can learn to steer his way down it within a few seconds of the record time. The rest is a matter of practice and technique. The qualities demanded of an expert Bob-runner do not begin to approach the skill and nerve and endurance and, indeed, the sheer bravery, of a Caracciola or a Nuvolari.

The Cresta, to my mind, is more exhilarating than the Bob, perhaps because one rides it alone. Ripping along the ice at a mile a minute in the crisp sparkling air of a Swiss winter morning, one's spirit soars upwards to the towering white peaks around. Sometimes, as I sped down, I found myself singing for joy—though the rattling of the runners on the ice and the rushing of the wind whisked the words away before even I could hear them.

But the death-or-glory boys don't find it exhilarating any more. Familiarity year by year with the track and with each other has left them *blasé*. The original thrill has gone and the joyous bodily sensation of casting oneself at breakneck speed down the mountain-side is theirs no more. They talk and think in terms of split seconds. 'How I enjoyed it!' has given place to 'How long did I take?' If they took fifty-nine seconds it was a grand run; if they took 59·8 it was terrible, and their countenances are covered in gloom.

A bitter personal rivalry exists between them, which an outward bluff heartiness quite fails to conceal. So, except on competition days, they never admit that they 're really trying. 'God knows what I shall do this morning,' they 'll say with an uneasy laugh, 'I 'm trying a new wagon'—wagon is their jargon for toboggan—or: 'I got Zuber to put ten pounds of lead on my wagon; I don't expect it will go at all.'

That does not apply to every regular rider of the Cresta, of course—least of all to Billy Fiske, the champion of them all for these five years or more. Nor does it apply to 'Lucky' Jim Lawrence, survivor of the air crash in which Lord and Lady

Plunket died, who was kind enough to give me much useful advice when I was a novice. Nor to Lt.-Col. Moore-Brabazon, M.P., who, well past the half-century, remains in the first dozen performers on the Cresta.

It was Brab, as a matter of fact, who suffered the only injury I saw on the Cresta. 'Changing hands'—i.e. performing the motions I have already described of sliding the seat back and clasping the toboggan in front with the top hand and at the back with the other—Brab managed to run over the fingers of his left hand. They were horribly bruised and, though I hate to say it, hung down like a bunch of black bananas. Very painful.

Though little physical strength is needed, women are forbidden to ride the Cresta, thus enhancing its carefully cultivated reputation for danger. Yet the truth is that a woman like Miss Amy Johnson, who was refused permission, would ride it at least as well as most men.

For riding it you get a little badge, price two francs; for going over the top at Shuttlecock, another little badge, price two francs; for riding the Bob, even from the half-way stage, a little badge marked 'World's Championship,' price two francs; for joining any of the innumerable 'exclusive' ski clubs, a little badge, price two francs. Believe me, I once saw an elderly, bejewelled woman, looking like an old cracked oil-painting, wearing eleven!

She was typical of that fantastic, far-away world that was pre-war St Moritz. From all over the globe men and women came yearly to see and be seen in this obscure little mountain town.

'St Moritz,' I read in a guide-book, 'owed its original importance to its innumerable springs, strongly impregnated with alkaline salts, which were probably used as early as the Bronze Age.' Later it was a case of Alka-Seltzer and the Gold Age.

The prices in St Moritz were notorious, matched only, as I am told, by those in Florida. It cost seven shillings one evening to hire a sleigh to go two hundred yards. As for the main street, which I christened Robbers' Row, it was an eternal temptation. So narrow that you could see conveniently into the windows of the jewellers on both sides at the same time. At first the prices appalled you—but they got you in the end.

The people, with pleasant exceptions, were the most artificial little community in the world—and the most pathetic too, some

of them. Playboys and their little playgirls, chasing fashion and the sun in a ceaseless effort to catch up with themselves.

'How I hate this place!' I heard a little countess remark, whose luggage would have filled a goods train. 'I think we 'll go to Cannes. . . . But then, Cannes is so boring at this time of year. Let 's try Egypt. . . . There are often some amusing people in Egypt.'

Why did these people, who made no nearer acquaintance with the snow than in stepping from their hotel door into a sleigh, make this pilgrimage every year? Because, whereas most of us could not afford to go to St Moritz, they could not afford not to. Publicity was their life-blood, columnists and cameras their food and drink.

Like its *habitués*, St Moritz itself lived on publicity. Having something to offer, it knew how to offer it well. When you noticed a picture of a skier, a skater, a curler, or even a film star posed elegantly on a toboggan, you could bet your bottom dollar that the caption ended with the words 'at St Moritz.'

How was it done? Easy. The hotel-keepers of St Moritz knew just who was 'camera-worthy' and who was not. It was their job to know. And to persons whose presence would be useful in attracting visitors they offered, according to their estimation of their value as bait, either heavily reduced rates, free accommodation, or in some cases, it was said, a pecuniary inducement to come at all.

The system, as in smart restaurants, worked one-sidedly. The man who sits at the obscure table behind the pillar has to pay double, in order to allow for the notabilities who see the cabaret at close range at the expense of the management. All of which is all right so long as you are not the man behind the pillar.

Still, there was a strange lure about St Moritz, and I thank it for the rich store of memories I accumulated there in so short a visit. I have written hard things about it, but I know that if ever we have the money, the leisure, and the freedom, to journey once again to the winter sports, it will be St Moritz that I shall make for.

FAILURE OF A MISSION

THERE is only one way to travel, believe me, and that is first class at the expense of Lord Beaverbrook. That is how I went to the United States for the second time.

Being in pretty good form at the time (with the pen, I mean; journalists have their on and off periods just like any one else), I was invited to record for the *Evening Standard* the activities of the 1936 Walker Cup team, who were to play the Americans at Pine Valley early in September, and at the same time given a roving commission to cover anything else that might appear to be of interest.

No journalist ever had a more welcome assignment. To be sent at all was a compliment that had been paid, I believe, only to one golf correspondent before—naturally Mr Bernard Darwin. Incidentally, a member of the team fell ill, Mr Darwin took the last place—and won his match. I suspect that the same thing very nearly happened to me, but we needn't go into that.

But I was anxious on my own account to compare the United States of 1936 with the savage, crude, and utterly unattractive country that had so shocked our youthful susceptibilities in the gangster and prohibition era.

Of a million golfers in Britain it falls to a tiny percentage to make the Walker Cup pilgrimage to America. Some of the best would give a year's income for the experience. I was getting it for nothing. Couldn't be better.

We set out in an atmosphere of bitter controversy. We were to travel on the *Transylvania* which, if it docked to schedule, would still leave the team less than a week for practice. The *Queen Mary*, recently put into service, was sailing at exactly the convenient time. Why not the *Queen Mary*?

However, last-minute intrigues failed to get the team transferred to the *Queen Mary*, and so one dark night we converged one by one upon an unprepossessing Glasgow quay and groped our way on board the good ship *Transylvania*. (Four years later I shed a nostalgic tear over the news that she had been sunk while serving as an auxiliary cruiser.)

We were an odd assortment. Whether the team were the ten best golfers in Great Britain I 'm not prepared to say, but geographically representative they certainly were—and for that

reason I had my doubts as to whether they would not very soon be falling out among themselves.

Harmony on these outings depends largely, as you will agree if you have taken part in one, on the captain. Our captain—I say 'our,' for although I was not officially attached to the team I was at once invited to consider myself as such, despite the last-minute assurance of the secretary of the R. and A. that it was 'against all precedent' to have a Walker Cup team contaminated by journalists—our captain was a thirty-nine-year-old Midland practitioner, Dr William Tweddell.

A reserved, amiable fellow was Tweddell, all for a quiet life. I doubted his ability to hold his miscellaneous crew together without friction. After all, he had nothing closer than a nodding acquaintance with any of them, and their ages, their interests and outlook on life, their incomes, even their accents, were as divergent as could be. I could see them, as the half-empty *Transylvania* bored its way leisurely across the Atlantic with a load of Middle West sightseers, getting on each other's nerves, or worse, breaking up into cliques.

We were, as I say, a motley crew—four Scotsmen, an Irishman, a Lancastrian, a Midlander, three Londoners (stockbroker, undergraduate, and schoolboy), and the official scribe. Of the Scots, Hector Thomson, by virtue of his amateur championship, was reckoned our leading golfer, with Jack Maclean a close second. Golf was their abiding interest. Gordon Peters was another fine Glasgow player, though more catholic in his tastes, while the irrepressible Morton Dykes, who had nearly played Rugby football for Scotland, was by that time a purely week-end golfer. He earned his place on his play in the championship a few weeks before, yet he confessed that he had really had no intention of playing in it. He only entered, he said, because it was at St Andrews—and he always enjoyed a week at St Andrews.

The Irishman was Cecil Ewing, a bespectacled giant from Sligo with a mighty drive and strong political principles. Harry Bentley, with his typically Lancastrian shrewdness and gay philosophical wit, was the 'character' of the party.

Alec Hill, Laddie Lucas, and John Langley represented the pampered south—and the old school tie. When the selectors had left a couple of places open till the championship results were known, Hill, a semi-finalist, got one of them. He, too, was the purest week-end golfer (a compliment, this), and had gone to St Andrews for no better reason than that a friend of his

cancelled his room in the hotel at the last moment, and so left it available for Hill. Rather 'thin on the top,' this pillar of the London Stock Exchange looked the oldest member of the party. He was, in fact, twenty-eight. We found that we had much in common.

Lucas at the time of his selection was in his second year at Cambridge and was to be captain the following year. He had the physique of an athlete, had been captain of cricket and football at Stowe, and was probably the best left-hander in the world at that time.

If Lucas, chosen while still an undergraduate, was *rara avis*, Langley was *rarissima*. He was chosen during his last holiday from Stowe, before ever he went as a freshman to Cambridge. Indeed, he was the youngest player ever chosen by either side.

Well, for two days we felt our way cautiously, each on his best behaviour, especially in the presence of the head master, Bill Tweddell. A comparatively insignificant incident broke the ice on the second night out. The head master had a second glass of kümmel to his dinner.

Golfing excellence, unlike excellence in most other games, goes hand in hand with alcohol, as many an open and amateur champion has shown. Incidentally, Harry Vardon had the last word on this subject. When, during the last war, a woman asked him to join the temperance movement, he replied: 'Moderation is essential in all things, madam, *but never in my life have I failed to beat a teetotaller*.'

Four of the team were teetotallers. If the other eight of us drank the ship dry of Pol Roger two days short of New York, and if the bill for kümmel one evening was four pounds ten—at the ship's price of ninepence a glass—well, what of it? It might have shocked the public if 'revealed' in the newspapers. I don't fancy it would have surprised the elders of the Royal and Ancient.

The only purpose of training for golf is to arrive on the tee with mind and body relaxed and at peace with the world. Bulging biceps and gritted teeth get you nowhere in this odd pastime. And the way to arrive with nerves taut and tempers on edge is to sit on a small transatlantic liner for eleven days on the water wagon, talking golf, golf, golf.

Some of the team did not feel inclined, for most of the journey, to talk golf or any other subject. Like the ten little nigger boys they succumbed one by one and retired, pale green and retching, to their cabins. Tweddell, Langley, and McLean were the chief

sufferers, Langley so bad that he had to have several visits from the doctor, while the rest went down intermittently. Only four of us came out unscathed, a condition attributed to calling for a bottle of Pol Roger within a few seconds of feeling a slight roll on the ship. We relieved our feelings by devising hideous tortures for the gentlemen responsible for sending us on the *Transylvania*. Meanwhile the American Press recorded that the British Walker Cup team was 'moving slowly, almost imperceptibly, across the Atlantic towards our shores.'

We arrived in New York and berthed insignificantly beside the *Queen Mary*. She had come in on the previous day, having left six days after us, and had broken the record. It was all rather galling.

The boys went off to Pine Valley in a motor coach while I stayed in New York for a couple of days. The change was extraordinary. The same old tribe were driving the taxicabs—Isidore Feuerman, Michael O'Cafferty, Barnet Zweig, Izzy Michelowitz were names that I noted under portrait-passports that every New York Jehu has to carry in the back of his cab—but they drove with an occasional consideration for other users of the highway. They no longer hooted at the red traffic lights to turn them green.

The hotel 'clurk' received me with courteous attention. No one spat on the drawing-room floor. I was rather disappointed.

At Pine Valley, as I arrived, I joined four of the boys coming down the last hole in a practice match. Behind them I crossed the little wooden bridge over the pond that lies below the eighteenth green. A moment later I felt an appalling stab on my right thumb and looked down to find my trousers covered with crawling wasps. The nest had been hanging from the bridge and, disturbed by the rest of the party, they had fallen on the rearguard.

The scene that followed was pure custard-pie comedy. Ted Turner, the Pine Valley professional, suddenly executed a series of wild leaps, yelling like a frenzied dervish. He had, he said, yellowjackets in his pants. As for myself, I bolted. Maybe it was symbolical of what was to follow that the distinguished visiting correspondent of the *Evening Standard* should lose his trousers within twenty seconds of entering the Pine Valley clubhouse.

American wasps—or yellowjackets as they call them, preferring four syllables to one, as in 'elevator' for lift—are naturally bigger and better than any other nation's wasps and sting in a correspondingly more savage manner. My hand swelled up and I could not touch a club for four days.

Every one who plays golf has heard of Pine Valley, few have had the luck to play there. I look on it as the greatest of all inland courses, the perfect 'examination' of the golfer's physical and psychological powers. It was cut at spectacular expense from some virgin forest slopes fifteen miles below Philadelphia, and such is Pine Valley's challenge to the conceit of American golfers, such is the legend of its defiance to mere man, that the club has two thousand country members, some of them living three thousand miles away.

The singular difficulty of Pine Valley is easily described. It has no rough, in the accepted sense of the term, and no semi-rough. Your ball is either on the fairway, in which case it sits invitingly on a flawless carpet of turf, or it is not. If it is not, you play out sideways till it is. In a week's golf, including the Walker Cup match, I saw no single recovery shot, as we use the expression. You don't make 'recoveries' at Pine Valley, except of course from the sand traps—you merely push your way into the undergrowth and endeavour to knock your ball out through the bushes to where it ought to have been in the first place.

The sand bunkers are desert wastes left bare and unraked round the greens. Small bushes grow in them, and no one is expected to smooth out his footprints. The greens, like the fairways, are perfect—once you get there. Par is seventy—with two long holes that no man has ever reached in two, and four short holes.

One of these, the fifth, may be the greatest golf hole in the world. Green and tee are on a level, two hundred and twenty-five yards apart, but between the two lies a vast depression, with a lake full of turtles and other unlikely creatures. The green itself, long and narrow, slopes sheer away on the right, and a ball that misses the green bobbles merrily down until stopped by a tree trunk. On the left a gravel pit gnaws its way into the green. To ensure a satisfactory level of casualties the club committee are in the habit of placing the flag far back in the left-hand corner.

I never forgot this fifth hole after our 1930 visit to Pine Valley. On the voyage across I enlarged upon its terrors to the team, none of whom had seen it before. The time came at last to play it once again. 'I 've waited six years for this shot,' I

observed—and nothing shall stop me from telling the rest of the story. The drive flew straight for the flag—just enough 'draw' to keep it from slipping down into the forest on the right, not enough to take it into the gravel pit. It finished, amid murmurs of applause, my own perhaps the most audible, nine feet from the hole; and the putt ran gently in for a two. Nothing much mattered after that. I was out, very cocksure, in thirty-four—but let no man rejoice at Pine Valley till the last putt is safely bottled in the hole. It took me forty-one to get home.

Incidentally, here is another tribute to Pine Valley. In 1930 it was the second of perhaps twenty courses that we visited. Of many of those courses I have the barest shadowy recollections; but such was the impression left by Pine Valley that six years later I was able to leave with the *Evening Standard* a detailed, hole-by-hole description of the scene of the Walker Cup match, complete with the par figures, descriptions of the hazards, the clubhouse, and what not, before sailing for America. With one minor exception it proved accurate to the last detail.

They 'll lay odds of anything up to ten to one against the ordinary scratch golfer breaking eighty in his first round at Pine Valley, and they are rarely known to lose. There 's a tradition at the club—I know of no parallel—that the cup of misfortune must be drained to the dregs, and no man shall pick up his ball midway to save the ultimate ignominy of revealing his score. Each hole carries its legend of tragedy to some victim or other. Roger Wethered's name, for instance, will always be linked with the eighth, a mere drive and a pitch—though what a pitch! The plateau green is microscopically small and pretty well surrounded by sand. Poor Roger, going strongly at the time, pitched in the sand. Thence he went to and fro, from sand to sand, and holed out in eleven.

One partner of mine completed the shortest hole in the course in twenty-three. Laddie Lucas was another who fell. Like so many left-handed players he was liable to spells of inaccuracy. He started 'spraying' his tee shots, as the Americans say—and Pine Valley is no place for the sprayer. In three rounds that I played with him before the match his lowest total was ninety-four—a score which in England, even at the age of twenty, he probably had not taken once in the past six years.

It was in one of these rounds that his caddie made an observation that will cling to Lucas to the end of his days. He and the caddie had already spent most of their time in the woods

when at the seventh hole Lucas hit another wild, curving slice that soared away over the forest. 'Watch it,' he cried. 'Watch it!'

'*You don't have to watch 'em,*' said the caddie, '*you gotta listen for 'em.*'

Incidentally, while we are talking of caddies—here is an 'It couldn't happen here' story. I was standing one evening at the bar of the road-house a mile or two from Pine Valley in which I stayed for the match, when I fell into conversation with a good-looking young American, attired in 'faultless evening dress ' and accompanied by an equally elegant young woman with corn-coloured hair. After the inevitable comparisons of conditions in Great Britain and the United States, we fell to talking of the prospects for the Walker Cup match and the performances of the various players in practice. He had been there during the day, it seemed, and was thoroughly familiar with the contestants on both sides. He criticized their style with an obvious knowledge of the game, and later events bore out his judgment in picking Gordon Peters as one of the best of our team.

Next day I saw him again on the course. He was Morton Dykes's caddie.

Both the Walker Cup teams were lodged in the Pine Valley clubhouse, and it wasn't long, if the truth be told, before the suspense, the solitude, and the pine-scented stuffiness of the atmosphere began to get on the nerves of the British side.

Tweddell in these circumstances made an ideal captain. He combined firmness with his natural amiability, and his reward was the lifelong friendship and respect of ten fellows from all walks of life whom he scarcely knew before. The loyalty of the team (not always, I may add, a feature of such outings) broke down Tweddell's innate reserve, and he made a great hit with the Americans. One night at a road-house, when the team's identity became known, Tweddell was dragged to a spotlighted microphone and made a speech that had two or three hundred people standing on chairs to applaud. I fancy he 'd never have backed himself to do such a thing when he left Glasgow.

The American team turned up at Pine Valley soon after ourselves and it was amusing to hear that two of them, Scotty Campbell and Harry Givan, had travelled farther to reach the club than we had. They had come from Seattle.

It didn't take long to realize that all these young full-time

American golfers were not only a cut above our own full-timers in the shape of Thomson and McLean, but could give fifty yards in a hundred to week-end amateurs like Tweddell, Hill, Dykes, and Ewing, who played golf largely for their own amusement. They were suitably impressed, but not the least frightened, by the course. Its tightness only accentuated their superiority. To ask some of our team to play round Pine Valley was like sending a boy for a scholarship when he could not pass a common entrance exam.

When the great day arrived, it was seen that the two captains, though each had had a seventy in practice, had left themselves out of the teams, Ouimet remarking characteristically: 'Waal, I 've been at this game a long enough time to give these young boys a chance to get some of the nice things of golf.' Lucas was dropped, inevitably, from our team, Dunlap from theirs.

We had a lovely day for the match, warm and easy, and the remoteness of Pine Valley kept the crowd down to people genuinely anxious to see the golf. No sightseers; no peanuts. I am afraid I had come to the conclusion before the start that if the match were to be played under identical conditions ten times we should be lucky to win it once. I think most of the team knew it too. We buoyed ourselves up with the hope that this might be the tenth time—but it wasn't long before we saw that it was going to be one of the other nine. I don't think that collectively a better team than these ten young Americans ever played in a Walker Cup match.

Incidentally, it was simple enough for the spectators to tell the teams apart. Every one of our side except Bentley wore the 'national costume' of white shirt and grey flannel trousers. Bentley wore a pair of trousers that had already been 'written up' by every American correspondent. A spectator had come up to him and remarked with a knowing air: 'It 's easy enough to tell you 're English by the cut of your trousers.' Harry's reply was: 'Yes, they 're good, aren't they? I bought them in Clementon the other day for a dollar sixty-nine!' It was quite true.

By lunch time our four pairs were five down, one down, one up, and four down respectively. By half-past three in the afternoon I thought I was going to have to cable home a score card of four noughts out of four.

But two gallant halves by Dykes and Peters, and Hill and Ewing left us something to play for in the singles after all, and

after the gloom of mid-afternoon there was something approaching jubilation in the camp. Alas, it took no time at all on the following morning to see that these Americans, if some of them were fallible in foursome play, to which they were unaccustomed, were quite unbeatable once they were on their own. I won't go into details. Suffice to say that at luncheon the British positions in the eight matches were two down, all square, two down, eight down, three down, four down, two down, five down. A melancholy catalogue. Yet our first three performers, Thomson, McLean, and Ewing, had had scores of seventy-four, seventy-three, and seventy-five.

In the afternoon there was no holding the Americans, and the British side of the scoreboard looked like a daisy chain, with twelve noughts one beneath the other. I settled down to cable the mournful tale and felt more than ever convinced that I should never live to see the Walker Cup won by Great Britain.

Next day we piled our luggage on the roof of one of the gigantic charabancs that are ten a penny in the United States and set off for the 'National'—the aristocrat of American golf clubs, down on Long Island Sound. Questioned as to whether he knew the way, the driver of this juggernaut tipped back his cap and said sure he knew the way. What did we take him for, anyway? He guessed it was his business to know the way. So what? We felt we had spoken out of turn.

We sat in that damned vehicle for just nine hours, stopping intermittently while the driver leant out to inquire the way. He was efficiently misdirected all over Long Island. Quite like 1930, in fact.

The National spread out for us a typically open-hearted American hospitality, and it was refreshing to be beside the ocean, playing purely for fun again. We bathed in the Atlantic surf, and both Bentley and I were nearly drowned. There 's something infinitely terrifying to the landsman in these vast ocean breakers that sweep your feet from under you and fling you about like a cork. It struck in me the same chill apprehension of being separated from one's natural element, the good earth, as did the aerial railway at Chamonix.

The National, incidentally, was founded by the late C. B. Macdonald, a great figure in the early days of American golf, and each hole is a copy of a famous hole in some other part of the world. Macdonald, by that time, was past eighty and already

a victim of the eccentricities of advanced age. He would break into song in the middle of dinner and launch himself into a series of impassioned speeches of welcome that never quite finished. He had a lovely house near by in which I was invited to stay, but it proved a somewhat mixed experience. Attired in a huge nightshirt, he wandered into my room one night, stared ominously at me for a minute, and then hurried away and roused the staff. There were strangers in the house, he said.

From the National the team split up and we drifted independently back to New York, where we had all entered for the United States amateur championship at Garden City. I settled down at the City Club, an old-fashioned haven of rest in the centre of the city, and set about comparing the town with the New York of 1930, and searching for fresh material to justify my stay.

An obvious line of interest was the presidential election campaign, then being boosted to its height. Roosevelt was being opposed by Republican Alfred Landon, Communist Earl Russell Browder, and William Lemke, an 'outsider' whose denomination I forget.

Roosevelt needed no further comment; Browder and Lemke mattered little in America, less in England. But Landon over here was comparatively unknown, and there were many in the States at that time who thought he might win. Landon, thought I, must be introduced to the great British public.

The man himself was too far away to be contacted, but I visited the Republican headquarters in Philadelphia and New York, talked with Republicans who were intimate friends of their candidate, and generally amassed a formidable file of information about Alfred Landon.

By the time I 'd finished it was a damned good article, though I say it myself. When it was duly typed, about two in the morning, I threw the notes and the rough copy into the waste-paper basket, mailed the article, and sauntered out, rather pleased with myself, into the dusty sweltering streets of New York in search of entertainment.

The article that was to tell Great Britain of America's potential President was never seen again.

Without my notes, when I returned to London and found that no one in the office had ever seen or heard of it, I had not a hope of recapturing that blend of elegance and factual accuracy that I liked to think characterized the original composition.

Another of life's little lessons dinned in by hard experience. Youthful and prospective journalists will please note the golden rule—Never mind the extra trouble. Keep a carbon copy.

Having dealt with Landon, as I thought, with such comprehensive skill, I turned my attention to another, more picturesque sphere of life, as represented by Mr Joseph Barrow, better known to the world as its pugilistic champion, Joe Louis.

I am not a boxing fan. I like to go to the bigger prize fights for a variety of reasons: primarily, perhaps, because someone is usually kind enough to give me a free ticket. Again, I like to see and meet the celebrated persons who gather by the ringside and, casting my eyes around at some of the rest of the company, to thank God, with the Pharisee, that I am not as certain other gentlemen are.

I like, too, to see a bit of good honest slugging, again thanking God that I am called to a way of life wherein we deal blows only by the pen. And, like most Englishmen, I respond readily to the crowd atmosphere.

It is my firm conviction that the technical boxing knowledge of the average ringsider is at least as meagre as mine.

Soon after the Walker Cup match Joe Louis, who rhymes with the town of Lewes and not with Louis Quatorze, was to fight one Al Ettore, who rhymed with 'ashore,' down in Philadelphia. One didn't need to be boxing fan to be intrigued with this drawling, slow-witted negro who has now for years defied challengers from all over the world. I was keen to see the fellow in person.

Local enthusiasts were in a frenzy of excitement, and on the day before the fight the gate had already reached $130,000. Ettore, who hailed from Philadelphia, was not ranked in Louis's class as a boxer, but he had a great reputation for stolidity and courage. He was outreached, too, but against that, as one scribe recorded, he could 'move those arms of his quicker than a lunch counterman in a rush hour.' He had won his last ten fights and had only once been knocked out—when he was caught napping by a certain Charley Retzlaff. They reckoned he had a three to one chance against Louis.

In order that my 'prospects' story should carry conviction I talked to one or two of the experts in New York. Frank Jacobs, who I was informed had managed Kid Berg and Nel Tarleton, stated that in his opinion Louis would win, but that he was not

so confident as most of the critics. Ettore, he added, was a man who did not know what fear meant.

Paul Damski, Walter Neusel's manager, confirmed with an engagingly atrocious accent that Louis would win. I then took a cab to a down-town gymnasium where a number of youths were training under a super-expert, by the name of Whitey Bimstein. Mr Bimstein, apparently, had trained Paolino Uzcudun. He had the traditional black cigar stub, unlit, and would have been ruled out of the average Hollywood film as a caricature. He shook me cordially by the hand, conducted me proudly round the establishment, and told me blood-curdling stories of what Louis had done to his Paolino.

'He hit Paolino on the side of the jaw,' said Mr Bimstein, 'and drove his teeth through the side of his face. I never seen noth'n' like it. I know Ettore can take it. But Louis ain't like the others. When he hits 'em, they usually stays hit.'

Meanwhile the 'Brown Bomber' himself, having been severely beaten up by Max Schmeling in the recent past—I believe he was in rather poor condition at the time—was taking no chances and was in magnificent shape. But it was significant that, contrary to his usual practice, he refused to nominate the exact round in which he reckoned to render 'Philadelphia's fistic pride and joy' unconscious.

'Some likes one round, some likes another,' was his final comment. 'Me, ah jest ketches him on the fly and brings him down first chance I gets.'

Philadelphia is a city of black and white millions. On the night of 22nd September, 1936, the whites, to a man, were thinking: 'Can the local lad make good and knock hell out of this nigger?' and the blacks were thinking 'To hell with Philadelphia and local pride. Let 's go and watch a black man knock hell out of a white man.' Not one person in a hundred over here has a conception of the racial prejudice that exists in the United States, even in the north.

Broad Street, Philadelphia, they 'll tell you, is the widest street in the world. They had made it 'one-way' for the first time in its history and cars made for the stadium seven, eight, and sometimes nine abreast at terrifying speed. We arrived to find a great open-air horseshoe bowl filled already with sixty thousand people. Nearly half of them were black.

Overhead, enterprising gentlemen were displaying a form of advertising which we have mercifully been spared over here.

The beauty of the full moon and the stars, a romantic ceiling for the vast assembly, was obscured by banners floating in the night sky and illuminated by searchlights. I made a mental note of protest never to sample the various beverages, chewing gum, and what not that they advertised, just as at home I have never used any product whose manufacturers have made the sky hideous by trailing banners behind aeroplanes—damn their impertinence!

We enjoyed a bloodthirsty appetizer between Purple Pants and Black Pants—whose names I have forgotten—in which Purple Pants staggered drunkenly round the ring until he was battered unconscious; and then the mayor climbed into the ring and invited us to stand in silence, in memory of one of the joint promoters of the fight, who had died on the previous Sunday. 'Neither race nor colour nor creed will enter into the hearts of any one of us watching the fight to-night,' he added. The niggers licked their lips in anticipation.

Cheers rose in a mighty roar as Philadelphia's hero clambered into the ring and waved his hands clasped over his head. A great beefy blond young man with the strength of a bullock.

A moment later a thunder of cheering greeted the arrival of a dark figure at the far end of the stadium. He was clad in a dazzling black and scarlet silk dressing-gown and escorted by a dozen mounted policemen and perhaps a hundred clamouring hangers-on. He looked, when he came near, as if he were not fully awake.

An extraordinary fellow. The proceedings seemed to arouse in him none of the emotional tension without which the champions in all walks of life will tell you they can't give of their best. Here was none of the animal savagery of Jack Dempsey, nor that handsome, manly air of determination that characterized the ambitious Tunney. Was Louis nervous? Was he confident, or apprehensive? Did victory mean everything to him, or didn't he care very much one way or the other? No onlooker could possibly tell. His eyelids drooped, his huge lips hung relaxed.

Out went the lights and the battle was on. Physically, if you don't object to the colour, Louis is the answer to the maiden's prayer. Rippling, sinewy muscles, and not an ounce of surplus. He looked like a sleek, gleaming panther beside his paler opponent. The bell seemed to bring his body, if not his mind, to life. Agile as a cat, with the poise of a ballet dancer, he provoked Ettore very much as a matador provokes the bull. I retain the impression of a long dusky left arm darting back and forth like a piston

of a railway engine—jab, jab, jab on its white target.

Still, Ettore kept up his reputation as a stickler that night, if nothing else. After a tremendous battering in the second round, he came out in fine style for the third and set about Louis as if to murder him. But Louis weathered the storm with the balance of a tightrope walker. Apart from a frown or two his facial expression might have been a mask. I presume he must have been thinking about something or other. If so, his face did not show it.

To the student of psychology in sport the fourth round held a richly entertaining moment. Ettore came fresh from his corner and squarely and solidly landed two gigantic thumps, perfectly timed, to Louis's body. They might have felled an elephant, and certainly would have killed the average untrained mortal. On Louis they had no effect at all. A bewildered, frightened look came into Ettore's eye. 'Well, if *that*'s no good,' it seemed to say, 'what the devil else can I do?' From that moment you could see that he knew he was done. He had played his ace, and it had been nonchalantly trumped.

A moment later a copper-coloured whirlwind had swept him up and was pummelling him against the ropes, while twenty thousand niggers stood on seats and roared 'He 's got him! He 's got him!' He staggered till the end of the round, but in the fifth a tremendous right-handed punch sent 189 pounds of Ettore flying six inches into the air, and he fell prostrate on his back. He tottered to his feet, but his limbs had turned to water and he sank slowly into insensibility. The winner retired to his corner expressionless and unmoved by the babel and was led away.

News travels fast, and as we drove home along Broad Street the whole coloured population lined the pavements for public exultation. Men and women danced grotesquely in their glee, and the children turned cartwheels in the gutter, while the whites drove sullenly home, looking steadfastly to the front and muttering: 'After all, it 's only a game!'

I turned my thoughts back to the presidential election. From New York to San Francisco, from Hollywood to New Orleans, an outsider was stealing the limelight from the four candidates.

He was Father Charles Coughlin, first and greatest of the 'Radio Priests.' A plumpish, bespectacled pedagogue in the middle forties, with a magic turn of phrase and an infectious, friendly smile.

Prophet or parasite? Saviour-deliverer or common mountebank? They are asking the question in America still.

Coughlin (you pronounce it 'Coglin') was widely ridiculed by his enemies—though often a hint of nervous apprehension could be detected behind their derision—yet he claimed eight million active disciples. His radio audiences may have amounted to thirty or forty millions. His followers believed him destined—and still do—to lead the United States back to a glorious prosperity, to find work with his Sixteen Points of Social Justice for ten million idle hands. His detractors looked forward to the time for him to fade back into obscurity and dismissed him with a nervous shrug of the shoulders as another of what Mr H. G. Wells termed America's 'raucous voices.'

But at least his enemies thought highly enough of him to descend to the most desperate, if unavailing, attempts to bar him from the medium by which he rose to fame—the radio. They indulged in every kind of unscrupulous manœuvre to keep him off the air—but still the millions listened.

'Father Coughlin,' declared Chicago's Bishop Gallagher, 'speaks with the voice of God.' The pope sent a cardinal all the way to the United States to state that this was by no means the official view.

I went down one night to hear Coughlin speak at Ebbet's Field, a baseball park down on Brooklyn. It was a stifling evening and the subway stank to high heaven as it disgorged thirty thousand perspiring units of humanity to make up his audience.

It might have been a cup final, from the noise that was going on. Hoarse gentlemen, for the most part tie-less and unshaven, endeavoured to uplift the spirit by the sale of tracts on social justice, life stories of Father Coughlin, and the coat-badges of his supporters. Vendors of peanuts, coca cola, and ice cream administered to the needs of the flesh. Both parties were continuously sniped by members of organizations hostile to the hero of the evening.

Inside the ground the first hour was spent in the process of stimulating our minds into an appropriately receptive mood for the arrival of the priest, and a very remarkable and well-staged process it was, though I doubt whether it would have had quite the same reception at Stamford Bridge.

In the centre of the arena rose a tall, white-draped, floodlit tower; at the side a band was playing; around the fringe was a

cordon of five hundred armed police. Inside this ring three hundred of Couglin's 'Branch Leaders' waited, uniformly dressed in dark coat and white trousers. Some were negroes, a great many were Jews. Most of them seemed substantial middle-class citizens.

Soon a second band appeared, forty-eight strong and impossibly attired in brass helmets, white capes, blue bell-boy jackets, and white trousers—as remarkable a force as ever paraded out of Hollywood.

At the head of a procession of the district leaders, the rear brought up by the original band, they trumpeted their way round the ground to a thunder of cheers. It wasn't long before the two bands passed within twenty yards of each other, playing two different tunes in two different times. I knew it would happen. Nobody seemed to mind.

The chairman of the meeting then ascended the tower—quite a young fellow—and the audience stood up and recited the oath of allegiance to the flag, before submitting to a final 'pep talk.' The chairman recited 'My country, 'tis of thee,' and exhorted us to make some 'financial sacrifice to see that the magic voice of the air shall not be stifled for lack of funds.'

A few more exhortations, a community rendering of the Coughlin theme song ('Now there came a righteous man, with a real constructive plan . . .'), and stage and audience were set to receive the star of the evening.

I have witnessed a jubilee and a coronation, I have heard the Arsenal score the winning goal in a cup-tie, but never have I heard anything to touch the ovation they gave to Coughlin as he marched into the stadium in the midst of his bodyguard, a battery of cameras recording his smile, his careless Fascist-like salute, the glint of his rimless spectacles in the floodlight.

'I 've a bad leg and a bad heart but I hobbled here just the same,' said a little woman in black on my right. 'They shot Huey Long. Every night I pray to God that nothing will happen to Father Coughlin. If it does, I shall give up hope. He is America's only salvation.' There was no doubting the old girl's sincerity. I was much impressed.

Coughlin is the showman *par excellence*. He takes the stage alone, with a microphone strapped to his chest to give him liberty of movement and gesture. As a priest he may be dabbling outside his proper sphere; as an economist he may be, almost certainly is, unsound; as a politician he may be crazy; but as a public spellbinder he is the master of them all.

He speaks with an attractive Irish brogue, which his enemies will tell you has been studiously acquired. His lapses in moments of stress seem to bear out the theory, as when in maligning Roosevelt he cried: 'Did he dew it? . . . NAW!' His microphone technique is a treat to watch. He 'll shield his mouth with the back of his hand, suggesting to each individual in the audience: 'I 'm telling you this in confidence. Don't let the others hear.'

He mixes straight politics, frenzied appeal, vivid similes from everyday life, quotations from the Bible, satire and jest in studied proportions. I never knew a preacher in church who could keep his audience spellbound, not noticing the time, for an hour and a half.

On the night I am recalling he was soon well into his stride, deep in the old controversy of machine versus man: the steam engine, the dynamo, Edison, Arkwright. 'We have won the war over want,' he cried, 'and still there is want in the midst of plenty. . . . *Whatsoever thou doest unto my little ones thou doest unto Me.* . . .'

Workers in the Chrysler factory were still paid seventy-five cents an hour 'as if God had never enlightened the minds of our engineers. That system must pass; it *shall* pass; and until it does pass no man shall stand up and talk of a NOO DEAL . . . *a little crib in Bethlehem.* . . .

'You remember the National Recovery Act—the Act that did not recover? ['Oh, my! That 's a home run,' said the little woman in black.] The noble experiment of ploughing under cotton, sacrificing pigs? You cannot *destroy* yourself into prosperity—the Cromwellian path of destruction. It is immoral to throw God's gift back in His face . . . *the blood of Jesus Christ.* . . .'

And the Big Bad Wolves of Banking—'The bankers created the money—pardon me, I missed a word—the *busted* bankers created the money. . . . Usury? What is usury? Not only lending good money at too big interest, but lending bogus money at any interest . . . *until the last sun shall set in its crimson settings.* . . .'

The sweat was pouring off his brow as he flung himself dramatically from side to side of his flood-lit tower, for all the world like a black-jacketed monkey on a vast illuminated barrel organ.

As for Roosevelt—'He 's sold you up the river at six per cent. He 's put the money changers back in the Temple and given the key to the people—fashioned in the shape of a double cross.

'Landon? Well, you can't afford the time to monkey around

with a good honest man who appears to be ignorant.

'And Browder? I love the Communists, but I hate Communism. There 's not a child born who wants to share his mother with every other child in the street!'

So he told us to vote for Lemke.

At the end of an hour and a half he left the stage as he had entered it, a solitary figure in an army of jostled and jostling police, waving his hand in a farewell salute. When she had done cheering, the little woman turned to me and asked where I was from.

'England,' I said.

She took off her blue-ribbon badge, emblem of her faith in Coughlin, and pinned it to my coat. 'Then go back to England,' she exclaimed 'and tell them the truth.' Tears were streaming down her cheeks.

What is the truth, according to the gospel of Father Coughlin, I am still uncertain. I know I enjoyed my evening.

After the golfing debacle at Pine Valley, where the victory of the Americans over our week-end golfers had been described as 'like taking candy from the Dionnes,' no one could be blamed for suggesting that our fellows' chances in the United States amateur championship were those of the proverbial snowball. Yet in the end one of them got through to the final and was beaten by the smallest possible margin in the most cruelly tantalizing match ever seen on a golf course.

My daily cables resembled the story of the ten little nigger boys, as, one by one, the British players were put out. They tried pretty hard, but it was my impression that, with one or two exceptions, notably Jack McLean, their hearts were no longer in golf. They wanted a rest from the game and its atmosphere. I didn't blame them.

Three of them were playing a practice round one day. '*Must be three of the Britishers,*' said an American bystander. '*They look so tired!*'

I had a crack in the championship myself. After beating a fellow fairly easily in the first round, I came up against McLean. In the first five holes I had four par figures and a 'birdie,' which, for the benefit of non-golfers, I may add is one below par and a matter of some satisfaction to the performer. This put me one up on Britain's leading golfer and I began to envisage the sensation that a victory by the official scribe would cause.

Alas, I missed a putt at the fifth, drove at the next two holes into bunkers of whose existence, after one quick practice round, I had not been aware, misjudged my second shot at the next, lost my temper at the one after, and was nicely beaten by five and four.

As the others fell by the wayside, McLean went on from one victory to another, and in the semi-final beat George Voigt with a really extraordinary exhibition of golf. There came a tornado the likes of which we only see in this country on the news reels. Forty miles away it rooted up houses and bowled them down the village street like barrels. People caught in the open leant forward at an angle of forty-five degrees, unable to move forward and afraid to start moving backwards. Palm-trees were bent double so that their top branches touched the ground. At Garden City the Press tent was wrecked, and at four o'clock it was almost dark.

In all this, and blinding rain besides, McLean went round in seventy-seven—and if that 's not golf, what is?

Next day he played Johnny Fischer in the final and, of course, a gigantic, and extremely noisy, crowd came out from New York in their shirt-sleeves to watch the game.

McLean again played confidently and well, and if my memory serves me he was one or two up at lunch. In the afternoon he began to draw away and was four or five up. He showed no sign of giving anything away, and Fischer, plugging steadily along, showed equally little sign of a serious come-back.

Then suddenly, on three greens out of four, McLean took three putts, and the whole complexion of the game changed. With three to play he was now only one up. But he pulled himself together very bravely at that thirty-fourth hole and played it like a master. His drive was perfect, and his second, never leaving the flag, left him a putt of five yards for a three. Fischer, meanwhile, was not doing so well. He had pushed his drive out into the rough and hooked his second down to the left of the green. He pitched it up, eight feet past the hole, for three.

McLean went boldly for the hole, missed it by a hair's breadth —I 'm not sure that his ball did not actually touch the rim—and lay perhaps two and a half feet past. Assuming that McLean holed this putt, Fischer knew that he must hole his eight-footer or his chances of becoming champion of the United States were gone. He made, for so fine a player, a rather miserable attempt and his ball screwed away to the right of the hole.

As it came to rest, the groans of the onlookers changed to a buzz of excited comment. 'He 's stymied him!' they were saying; and so he had, with the deadest, cruellest stymie you ever did see. McLean tried a bold and dangerous shot with his niblick, showing that his heart, if not his head, was still sound, but it was a ten to one chance. In the end he had to hole one of a yard coming back to get his half. One up with two to play.

Neither of them could reach the thirty-fifth in two that day, but they halved it in four, and you can't ask fairer than that. And so they came to the thirty-sixth, a picturesque little hole over a pond to the green beside the clubhouse. It must have been a nerve-racking shot at such a moment, to this little green island in a sea of perspiring and excited humanity. Round the fringe of the crowd were rows of news-reel cameras mounted on motor cars.

McLean played a beauty, twelve feet from the hole, and to Fischer standing on the tee that ball must have looked very, very near indeed. His chances of winning the championship at that moment were certainly no better than fifty to one, but he too played a lovely, crisp, high shot and when it finished it was a couple of feet nearer than McLean's.

McLean rolled his ball down the slope, and first we thought it would and then we thought it wouldn't, and finally, again by the width of a cat's whisker, it didn't. But this time it was stock, stone dead a few inches from the hole, and we knew, at least, that there were to be no more stymies. Fischer must hole it for a two, or shake hands.

If the crowd had been noisy before, they were certainly silent now. As Fischer lined up to what he must have known was the crucial stroke of a lifetime, they stood around holding their breath, motionless as wax figures. He was just going to take his club back when 'WHIRRRRRR . . .' went the news-reel men, whose job is to get the picture and to hell with any one.

There were angry shouts and threats and abuse from the company, and poor Fischer wearily rose from his putt and walked away to begin his concentration all over again. You don't have to play golf to realize that the spell was broken and his chances virtually gone. As he settled down once more, I remember feeling happy that McLean should win the championship and with it restore some of our lost prestige, but embarrassed that it should have finished in this unhappy way.

And as these thoughts ran through my head, Fischer rolled his putt gently into the hole for a two.

Pandemonium reigned for ten minutes as several thousand people stampeded for points of vantage round the first, or thirty-seventh, hole. Men with red flags roared at them; broadcasters with portable machines strapped to their backs panted out their, literally, running commentaries; pressmen rushed for their telephones; and the world at large pushed and scrambled its way through the bunkers and anything else that might impede it from seeing one of the classic finishes in golf history.

When order was restored, the entire hole was completely encircled like a football pitch.

McLean was eventually about four feet from the hole in three, Fischer perhaps ten yards away in two. Anything might happen. Fischer might well take three points: McLean on the other hand might still miss his.

Fischer struck this one as sweetly as the last, and as it ran towards the hole I could see that we could give up any hope of his missing the next. A second later the ball had dived into the hole, and Fischer was champion.

It 's an old golfing maxim that luck will always 'even out' in the end, and it nearly always does. It was two years afterwards, one windy morning on the Ayrshire coast at Troon, that I saw Fischer subjected to almost as cruel a stymie as the one which, undoubtedly, had changed the fate of that game at Garden City.

He had come over with the Walker Cup team, and this time it was their team who were playing in our championship. At eight o'clock on the first morning the draw had decreed that Fischer should play his compatriot Charles Yates in the first round. Here were possibly the two finest golfers in the United States, three thousand miles from home, and one of them fated to have cut the other's throat by half-past ten on the first morning.

They finished the eighteen holes all square and proceeded once again to the first tee, facing the 'sudden death' of the extra holes. Two grand drives, two grand seconds—Yates ten feet away, Fischer twelve. Fischer went first and missed by an inch. Yates missed two, but his ball ran round the hole and lay on the lip, leaving the other fellow a stymie so 'dead' that the balls could not have been more diabolically placed by hand. Fischer had no alternative but to try to pitch clean in the hole. He failed. And to complete the story, Yates went on to win the championship.

Another New York diversion was the tennis championships out at Forest Hills, where we were looking to Fred Perry to keep the British flag flying. He was at the height of his fame and I was intrigued to see what sort of a fellow he was.

The general reputation of lawn tennis players is not what you might call enviable. As to the justice of this I cannot speak. I can, however, say that I found Perry, the champion of champions, an unaffected, easy-going fellow with a good sense of humour. What particularly impressed me was the way he welcomed me into the dressing-rooms half an hour before he was due to take the court against Bitsy Grant in the quarter-finals. At a time like this, you 'll find most of these sporting aces very much on edge and unapproachable.

We talked of this and that, and as we talked I could hardly credit that I was meeting this man for the first time. His manner of speech, the things he said, his outlook on life, all seemed familiar. It was ten minutes before I realized that Perry was the spit image of Henry Cotton.

The similarity between the two was at times uncanny. The same clipped, rather high-pitched way of talking, the same thin, determined lips, the same eyes, the same lissom athletic figure. Their records, too, were startlingly similar. Each had fought his way up through a barrage of hostile criticism and been dubbed with that inevitable journalistic description, 'stormy petrel.' Each was now the accepted champion in his own sphere. Each had the same tendency to introduce the financial element into the conversation. To talk to the one was almost to talk to the other.

Perry by this time was tiring of tennis, though he won the championship easily enough and did, in fact, continue playing seriously as a professional for two or three more years. He confessed, rather pathetically, just before going on to the court to receive the roars of the crowd, that his great ambition in life was to quit the game and take to golf.

The game of golf seems to have some hidden lure to lawn tennis players—I can't think why. Perhaps you don't have to run about so much. At any rate, I came to know Ellsworth Vines, that most charming of Wimbledon champions, quite well when he was over here in the summer before the war, playing exhibition matches with Tilden's 'circus.' Vines is a pretty good golfer, and he took a few days off to go up to Hoylake and play in the amateur championship. We used to meet quite often in the

evenings, and he made the same confession as Perry. Only one ambition—to quit tennis and take to golf.

The reason why he did not do so forthwith was typical of Vines. He had been instrumental, he said, in persuading Donald Budge to turn pro. and join the 'circus.' If he himself left it now, Budge's main opposition (on the tennis court) would have vanished, and with it some thousands of dollars in gate money.

'I' ll have to stay for another year while he "cashes in," ' said Vines.

At Forest Hills Kay Stammers was also doing pretty well. I think she almost reached the semi-final—a rare feat for an English player. I found her a lively, good-looking girl, though not so ready to talk to a mere reporter as Perry, the world champion. It was reported that she was to go to Hollywood for a film test and, if this was successful, to be employed at some fabulous fee.

This she denied, with the comment that it would entail going to live in Hollywood, which she would loathe—'and I probably could not act anyway.' I cabled these comments with the rest of the story and we had the satisfaction of printing them to coincide with the announcements by our two rival evening papers that Miss Kay Stammers was to go to Hollywood for a film test.

Life in New York I found to be distinctly more pleasant than in 1930; partly because I was now better equipped to battle with the Big City, partly because life is always richer and more full if you are recording your daily impressions for the benefit of others, but chiefly because of the change that had come over the place itself. They seemed to make less noise and to be in rather less of a hurry. Bills in hotels and restaurants were frequently correct first time, and even the taxi drivers often had time to be civil. Perhaps a city, like a man, can mature in the short space of six years.

Like every good tourist, I ascended the hundred and one storeys of the Empire State building, a thousand-and-something feet high. Englishmen are too often *blasé* about these things. They think there is something rather *infra dig.* about 'doing the sights' and being taken for one of the common herd, so they miss many of the rare spectacles of this life. And New York, make no mistake about it, from the top of the Empire State at night is indeed a rare spectacle.

I leant over the dark parapet and surveyed the scene as though from another world. The moon was glistening on the Hudson River and, way down below, the *Queen Mary* lay lit up in her dock, looking for all the world like a toy ship that you float in the bath. A million lights were twinkling, and as I watched them from the silent tower I thought of all the myriad cross-currents of human relationships going on down there below, all the love and hope and self-sacrifice, all the plotting and planning and scheming, and all the bitterness and hatred and despair.

This viewing of one's fellow mortals from above induces strange emotions. As I stood there, taking a time exposure on the film of memory, my mind went back to a night in London not long before, when King George V and Queen Mary had held their Jubilee. I had flown over the floodlit city and seen Buckingham Palace looking like a great iced cake in the arc lights. A hundred thousand people were standing in the Mall, shouting for the king and queen to come out on the balcony. To us they seemed no more than a swarm of ants round the cake.

And then, months later, the most moving scene of all. This time we were flying home one Sunday from Brussels. In a few short minutes we had passed over Canterbury Cathedral, its spires casting thin, elongated shadows in the pale December sunshine, and had come to Westminster. And from Westminster Hall there stretched a long, black line of people like a human snake. Its body stretched along the Embankment and over Lambeth Bridge, and its tail curled along the river on the other side. London was paying its last homage to the king.

From New York we drifted home as the spirit moved us. For myself, with one or two others I boarded that vast, floating Ritz that has eliminated the last vestige of adventure from ocean travel—the *Queen Mary*.

On the last night of the voyage I joined a party in what may be termed the *Queen Mary's* night club, known as the Veranda Grill—an establishment endowed with all the attributes of the modern bottle party, tiny, overcrowded, unbelievably stuffy, and opaque with the smoke of cigars. The band stopped nominally at two, but were willing to continue so long as any of the patrons had any spare dollars. At the time in question it was about four in the morning.

A man sitting at the table I had joined, whose name I didn't know, was quietly intoxicated—so quietly, indeed, that nothing would induce him to speak. In the centre of the table was a

vase of gladioli. Waking from his torpor, the man stretched out a listless hand and drew forth a gladiolus. He then broke off the spiky green piece at the end, popped the rest of the flowers into his mouth, and solemnly munched and swallowed them. Without uttering a syllable, he ate three whole gladioli.

We then adjourned to someone's cabin, where my eyes at once fell on a bowl of chrysanthemums, great big white ones, seven or eight inches in diameter. Our friend sat silently on the table and ate two of them. He was starting on his third when I left for bed.

I have never met any one able to account for this strange phenomenon. Lotus-eaters, yes: gladiolus- and chrysanthemum-eaters, no. Next morning, as we edged our way slowly up Southampton Water, I saw the fellow walking silently round the deck. He seemed fit as a fiddle.

We edged slowly into our berth, looking down on a cluster of news-reel cars awaiting the willowy, blonde Mrs Beryl Markham, who had flown the Atlantic from east to west. More than that I cannot tell you about the lady, for she declined to be interviewed during the voyage, thus losing herself much valuable publicity, and saving me a great deal of bother.

When we left New York, they told us we were due to dock at Southampton at twelve noon three and a half days later. As the first hawser went overboard, the clock was striking twelve.

ROYAL AND ANCIENT

WHETHER you play golf or whether you don't, you will know the name of St Andrews, the 'auld grey toon' in Fifeshire that is the golfing capital of the world.

You will also, perhaps, have conjured up some mental picture of its appearance. If so, your picture will be wrong. Not a man I know but has had to readjust his preconceived picture when first he came to St Andrews.

You see at once, as you approach St Andrews in the little two-carriaged train that puffs its way along the two or three miles from Leuchars junction, why they call St Andrews the 'auld grey toon.' Almost every building in the town except the Grand Hotel (what a pleasant change to be able to write Grand Hotel.

A newspaper sub-editor would turn it like a flash into 'one of the principal hotels.' Mustn't give advertisements away for nothing), almost every building except, I repeat, the Grand Hotel is the same dull shade of grey. The Grand Hotel towers behind the first tee a fine Victorian dark red.

A pastime from which the populace derive much pleasure is watching the face of the newcomer as he orders a taxicab on arriving at the station. There are no taxicabs. St Andrews, like the Royal and Ancient golf club whence springs its fame, is in no hurry. It rides in the oldest, hardest, darkest, blackest, and most dilapidated horse-cabs in the world. They are comparable, in my own life, only with a vehicle known as the 'death cart,' in which we used to be trundled down to the Charterhouse sanatorium.

The pilgrim will not be long in confirming that he has reached the golfer's Mecca. Every man in the town talks, breathes, eats, sleeps—and drinks—golf. Errand boys march the pavements with a putter under one arm and a basket of groceries on the other. Half the shops sell clubs and balls. The other half sell golf clothes.

And now let us take a look at the links, from our window in the Grand Hotel. On our right, a hundred yards away, is the seashore, with the bay curving at once away to the right. Between us and the sea is the solid, four-square, grey clubhouse of the Royal and Ancient. Fifty yards on our left a row of grey houses (including, to give him a break, Captain Rusacks' excellent hotel) stretch straight away from us, with a road in front of them. The road is bounded by some open, white fencing, and inside that is the eighteenth fairway.

In front of us is the stage on which so many golfing dramas have been played, the eighteenth green. Level with it on the right the golfers queue up on the first tee. So the first and eighteenth holes form one big rectangle like a polo field, crossed by the famous Swilcan Burn at the far end. There is no rough in this rectangle, and no bunkers. Just a flat, wide open expanse of grass. And when the crowds come in their thousands, no one may enter the rectangle but the players. The road and the fence behind the eighteenth green are lined ten deep, every window is packed, even the Royal and Ancient roof has its quota—while the lonesome, solitary figures wage their battle in the middle. What a thirty-sixth hole for a championship final! Worse still, what a thirty-seventh!

Over against the last green is Tom Morris's shop, where skilled craftsmen still make clubs that are sent all over the world. Old Tom Morris, Young Tom, Allan Robertson, and Jamie Anderson were some of the original St. Andrews men whose names have now faded into golfing legends.

They have a fine portrait of Old Tom in the clubhouse (and a fearful one of the Prince of Wales in a Fair Isle jumper. What a pity his captaincy of the club coincided with that appalling sartorial era!). Old Tom, like 'W. G.,' has a splendid and determined beard—he was about seventy at the time—and his coat is done up with the top of its four buttons. Never having known or seen him, one can look at the portrait and say: 'It must have been just like him.' When they took him into the club to look at it, the old boy gazed for some moments in silence and then said: 'Aye. He 's got the check of my cap just right.' With that he marched out of the room.

Jamie Anderson also made a remark that will live in golfing history. He went down to play in a knock-out tournament at Hoylake, back in the seventies, and very soon found himself playing the nineteenth hole. At this critical juncture he sliced his drive out of bounds. Silently he put down another—and sliced it out of bounds. Reaching in his pocket he produced a third ball—and sliced it out of bounds.

'*Ma God,*' he said, '*it's like playing up a spout!*'

I had played the game for fifteen years before I made my first pilgrimage to St Andrews. When the great moment arrived, I entered the Big Room in the clubhouse as one who crosses the threshold of a shrine. And the first words I heard uttered in that holiest of holies (and I swear this is true, for I wrote them down at the time) came from an old gentleman sitting beside the fireplace. He said: '*I must agree, sir, that a certain lack of discipline is to be observed among the younger generation to-day.*'

Like all ruling bodies the Royal and Ancient move slowly and are therefore freely criticized by the 'progressives,' but, taken by and large, it is fair to say that they serve with a quieter and more consistent efficiency than any other governing body in sport. It takes them a long time to make up their minds, but when they do they are generally right. In keeping with other time-honoured institutions they have made gradual concessions to democracy and nowadays they even recognize the existence of—I would not go so far as to say the necessity for—the Press. Indeed, last year another fortress fell and they admitted professionals during the

open championship. Previously even the champion had to stay outside, if he was paid for his skill.

Women, of course, are absolutely *verboten*, and every ancient St Andrews golfer may be relied upon to rotate in his grave when women are permitted to set foot in the Royal and Ancient. The general attitude was well reflected by the comment of a member when during the 1939 open championship he observed a woman cashier at the receipt of custom in the dining-room. To appreciate its full richness you should read it slowly, word by word, with a puffing sort of grunt between sentences. He said: 'Dammit. It 's a woman! Last woman I saw in here was an American. She was smoking. In the Silence Roo. . I soon had 'er out.'

People out of Scotland rarely appreciate that St Andrews, like so many Scottish courses, is a public links—just like Richmond Park. Any one can play there on payment of half a crown.

There are four courses: the Old, on which it is the object of every pilgrim to play; the New, to my mind, one of the worst seaside links in the world; the Eden, enjoyable, but inconsiderable; and the Jubilee, for women and children. The Old course, appropriately enough, is like no other golf course in the world. It is a golfing monument. As such, it will probably remain untouched so long as golf is played.

Yet there 's hardly a man who has not been perplexed, astonished, and thoroughly disappointed with the Old course at his first visit—though woe betide him if he 's fool enough to say so at the time. It will take him years to live it down. When Francis Ouimet brought his young Walker Cup team over in 1938, fresh from the park-like well-watered courses of America, he drilled them to say, when asked their opinion of St Andrews: 'I 'm crazy about it!' You had to judge by the tone of their voice and the look in their eye which way to take it.

All the same, you will find a good many folk who will tell you it is a great course, just to be in the fashion, when their real opinion is unprintable. Perhaps the truth is that it is great fun to play, especially in view of its historic associations, but that no man in his senses would lay it out in the same way to-day if he had a fresh start.

After all, it must be a pretty good fluke if a course laid out more than a hundred years ago, almost as casually as caddies make practice holes behind the caddie shed, turns out to be a

classic links when golfers use a ball that goes a hundred yards farther.

Playing the Old course is like doing a jig-saw puzzle. The correct line is always a shade to the right or a shade to the left of something or other. When I played my first round there, I was piloted by Joe Fairlie—who, strangely, was the original of Bulldog Drummond. He would point out the precise line from each tee and, enjoying one of my more accurate days, I was able to follow it. I finished in every kind of unseen hazard, and it was not until the match was over that he admitted he 'd been doing it on purpose.

I suppose the Road hole—or seventeenth—is the most famous golf hole in the world. Hearts have been broken there, tempers ruined, and champions made and dethroned. The drive is over the stationmaster's garden—but that is a euphemism, for in reality the stationmaster and his garden vanished years ago and nowadays you drive over the corner of some prosaic black railway sheds. This hole has been copied, generally without success, all over the world.

In one all-important sphere of the game the Royal and Ancient, as befits a ruling body, were supreme. They served the finest golf-club lunch in the world, and when you asked the silver-buttoned stewards for a gin and french shaken up, they brought you for eighteenpence a quantity that no self-respecting London barman would sell for less than ten shillings.

LANCASTRIAN AT LARGE

You never meet an honest fisherman. You sometimes meet an honest golfer. But not very often. Perhaps my mind is warped by having met so many of them in a professional, journalistic capacity instead of coming into merely social contact with them, when their little eccentricities, exaggerations, and concealments do no one any harm.

At any rate, after a year or two in the business you learn to class players of golf in four categories: the absolutely honest (perhaps two per cent); the absolutely dishonest (not more than two per cent either); those who will tell you the truth so long as it suits them; and the vast majority, who will go to their grave declaring they 've never told a lie, but whose account of their

own achievements is coloured, often unconsciously, by their desire not to show themselves in an unfavourable light.

Among the strictly honest two per cent I should name a very old friend of mine, Harry Bentley. I used to believe him equally when he said he was round in sixty-eight, but did not, in fact, play as well as his score would indicate; and when he told me that his score was seventy-six but as a matter of fact he was unlucky not to get a sixty-eight. Of all the golfers I have met in my life I would write that of approximately six.

Harry is one of the 'characters' of the game. His home is in Southport, and he has all the outward dourness of the Lancastrian. Underlying it is a penetrating dry humour, and that devastating frankness with which the North so often shocks the sheltered South. His accent, naturally broad, varies according to the company. Set him down in Mayfair among the up-twirled moustaches of the guardees and the futile chatter of the hothouse butterflies with nothing in life to do and too long in which to do it, and Harry will lay on a Lancashire accent with a trowel. He knows it amuses them. What they don't know is that it amuses him more.

In search of business, golf, and other forms of pleasure, Harry must have been to France twenty or thirty times. His French accent remains indescribably, and I think deliberately, atrocious, and his literal translations are enough to break the grammarian's heart. 'Un petit morceau du tout droit' for 'a little bit of all right' is nothing to him.

Defending his title as French amateur champion over at Biarritz he played General Critchley in the round before the semi-final. On the last green the general was close to the hole, while Harry was left with a putt of fully eight yards to keep the match alive. The green was composed of two terraces, the flag on the top terrace and Harry's ball on the lower. He had to putt across the slope with an acute left-handed 'borrow,' and his chance of holing the putt cannot have been more than one in twenty.

The green was ringed with spectators, who stood hushed as spectators do when witnessing the exit of a champion. The general was observed to be rubbing the palm of his right hand on his trouser leg, preparatory to shaking hands.

Harry bent down in silence over the putt that was to put paid to his chances of remaining champion of France. The gallery held their breath. Any moment now.

Slowly Harry straightened his back. He beamed genially on the company.

'*Très difficile*,' he drawled.

He started all over again. Needless to add, he holed the putt, beat the general at the twenty-first hole, and won the championship.

Having won it now for two years in succession he took to calling France 'my country,' and the French 'my people.' Next year, trying to complete the hat-trick, he was beaten, to the surprise of the winner and every one else, by John Bealey. After the game he fell back in an arm-chair in the Pavillon Henri-Quatre at Saint-Germain, his face long and lugubrious.

'I think I 'll just go into Paris to-night and preach to my people,' he said.

Harry's golfing style, for one who has spent so much of his life at it, is outwardly unconvincing. It has a painstaking, artificial quality. But his philosophical temperament makes him a great match player. He has won the English, French, and German championships, and, I think, the Belgian, and has played in two Walker Cup matches, and that 's a good enough record for any one.

He is by no means a long hitter—indeed, for the class of golf in which he figured I should say he was distinctly on the short side. People often used to ask me who was the longest hitter I ever saw and my reply was always E. Nugent Head. In the last English championship before the war, played on Harry's home course at Birkdale, the two of them met—an intriguing contest between guile and accuracy on the one hand and brute force, as yet incompletely harnessed, on the other.

Head is himself an enormously massive man who can swish the heaviest driver to and fro like a comedian's cane. His length is positively fantastic and his opponents, victorious or otherwise, inevitably return to the clubhouse with tales of the unbelievable distances he has driven his ball. I remember playing in a four-ball with him and Lister Hartley and Gerald Micklem on the Old course at Addington. We came to the sixteenth, that great two-shot hole that displays so well the architectural genius of the late J. F. Abercromby. You drive down a gully, hugging the left-hand side as narrowly as you dare, and then play a long second over a ravine to a green cut in the side of the hill.

We all played good tee shots, and three of us in turn failed to reach the green with our seconds. Indeed, one can say it was

not in reach of two shots by normal men that day. We then marched forward for a while and came to Head's drive. We observed him with some awe to be taking out a smallish iron club.

Head gave an almighty heave at the ball and sent it, with a cloud of earth, grass, and small stones, approximately forty yards.

'What club did you take there, Eddie?' someone inquired.

'*I stood in front of a number four,*' he replied darkly.

I am afraid he has never been allowed to forget that incident. If ever he makes a bad shot these days, someone is certain to ask: 'What did you stand in front of there?'

Still, that 's a digression, and the shot I have described by no means represents Head's golfing powers. It was quite a late round in the championship in which he played Harry Bentley.

After eighteen holes they were still all square and a large throng swept along the nineteenth hole with them. People who had heard, and disbelieved, the tales of Head's phenomenal length poured out of the clubhouse to see it put to the final test—and a better testing ground than the first hole at Birkdale you could not possibly find. It measures something just short of six hundred yards, and on the occasion in question a slight breeze was blowing directly against the players.

Harry played a good drive and a good second and reached the green with a No. 5 iron for his third, a shot of perhaps 150 yards. Quite orthodox.

Head hit a whacking great drive and flung himself with a grunt into the second shot. I can see it now, whistling through the wind like a white cannon ball against the blue sky. There were gasps of awed astonishment mingled with half-incredulous laughter that such a thing should be true. His ball finished one yard short of the green—570 yards against the wind in two strokes. He won the hole in four, and with it the match.

Harry and I spent much time together in New York during the 1936 Walker Cup tour. New York and Harry Bentley did not seem to fit in with each other, which struck me as odd, considering his general zest for life. Call New York what you like, you can hardly call it dull. 'There 's nothing to do,' was Harry's complaint. Even the burlesque show of the brothers Minsky on Broadway, to which I took him one evening, only banished his boredom for a moment.

Any man, to digress, who says he is unmoved by Minsky's burlesque either is a liar or else should see a doctor. Minsky's is—or rather was, for I believe it has been closed by the police

since then—the original palace of strip-tease, that form of 'art' which swept London in the early stages of the war until killed by the newspapers. The appeal of these shows was frankly, openly sexual—and for myself I prefer it that way. Better a thousand times than our ludicrously hypocritical attitude over here, whereby a young woman may stand naked on a pedestal five times a day at the Windmill Theatre. So long as she keeps still she is 'art'; if she moves a finger to scratch the back of her head she is an indecent exhibition, and Mr Van Damm may be fined £100 or locked up in jail.

Is it really for art's sake that a ninety per cent male audience will pay eight shillings and sixpence to see the nude ladies of the Windmill posture on their pedestals? Was it art that crowded the bottle parties of London with dukes, peers, actors, stockbrokers, journalists, and business gentlemen when Marqueeze and the lady with the live snakes were exhibiting their undraped shapes to the public gaze? Come, come, sir!

Frankly I prefer the approach of the brothers Minsky. 'Here are some of the most beautiful women in the world,' they said. 'They will sing to you and then they will take off their clothes. It isn't art. It 's sex. If you want art, go to an art gallery. If you want sex, pay fifty cents and step right in.' Harry and I stepped in.

We saw the performance through. Miss Gipsy Rose Lee, I think it was, came to the microphone in a glamorous evening gown, sang succulently, and then divested herself, stage by stage, of every stitch she had on. Interspersed with variety turns, other ladies did likewise. If the applause was sufficiently encouraging when they left the stage, they would be prevailed upon to return and cross from one side to the other in their birthday suits. So appreciative were the gentlemen sitting in their shirtsleeves in the front rows that some of the girls had to run this naked cross-stage gauntlet half a dozen times.

We emerged into the stifling atmosphere of Broadway in summer. I asked Harry if he had found the entertainment diverting.

'Aye,' he said. '*It 's food for thought.*'

Harry's directness of thought and the disconcerting way in which he translated it into speech were never shown better than one sunny day in August a week or two before the declaration of war. The scene was the balcony of the golf club up in the hills behind Bad Ems, and Harry had just won the German

championship. He had weathered the ordeal of having his hand pump-handled up and down by golf dictator Karl Henkell, while the latter delivered himself of a long, unintelligible speech in German, and he had duly received the big silver trophy.

It was a time when one 'crisis' succeeded another, and talk of war was naturally in the air.

'Would you like to take the cup home with you or would you rather leave it here?' Herr Henkell asked him.

'Oh,' said Harry with brutal bluntness, 'I 'll take it home. We may be at war before long.'

Henkell, who is Ribbentrop's uncle-in-law and ought to know about these things, replied to the effect that according to his certain knowledge there would be no war between Germany and Great Britain. (To give him his due, he probably believed this to be true, for they say it was Ribbentrop's conviction right to the last that the British would not fight.)

That didn't go far with Harry.

'Never mind,' he said. 'You never know, and I'll take it just the . me. If you win, you 'll get it back anyway. And if we win, I 'll keep it till we play for it again.'

So Harry took his trophy home and now it sits on his sideboard in Southport. I wonder how long it will be before we are playing for it again?

DURLING'S THE NAME

THE scene was the bar of the Hendon golf club. I had been playing, quite ineligibly, for a team representing the Greyhound Racing Association against the Bookmakers. I forget who won the match, but I know that General Critchley, probably champion of one or two European countries at the time, was beaten by four and two by the bookmakers' ace, Elliot Gibbs.

Gibbs is a quiet, inoffensive fellow, spectacular neither on the golf course nor off it, but an unusually good golfer who makes up for lack of length with a devastating short game. His job in life is to don his white gloves, and with the same unassuming efficiency that he displays on the golf course to 'tic-tac' to the silver ring the prices prevailing in the more *élite* seven-and-sixpenny enclosure.

The pints of Pimm's No 1 that bookmakers invariably drink on these occasions had been flowing for some time when the general announced that he would play Gibbs over thirty-six holes on the New course at Addington any time he liked, and would any of the opposition care to back their man?

A matter-of-fact voice at the bar said: 'I 'll have a hundred and fifty.' Another said: 'I 'll have seventy-five.' So did a third. A fourth said: 'I'll have a pony. Who 's playin'?'

In less than one minute the total was four hundred pounds.

The voice that had offered to wager a hundred and fifty pounds on a golf match as casually as a man taking a sixpenny ticket in a raffle belonged to a plumpish man in the late middle forties. He had an attractively throaty voice and an unconcealed self-assurance. I judged him to be carrying about a stone over weight. His name was Ted Durling.

That day Ted Durling and I struck up a curiously ill-assorted friendship that lasted undimmed until, at the beginning of the war, after fifty-one crowded, energetic years of life, he suddenly died.

Outwardly we had nothing in common. He was twenty years older than I. While I had been making my way from one exclusive scholastic establishment to another, Ted, starting from scratch, had been laying his foundations in the bookmaking world. While I was absorbing from Professor Pigou at Cambridge the theory of money, credit, and prices, Ted Durling, who knew nothing of the academic theories of this tedious trinity, had so far mastered their application in practice as to capture, as his own citadel of street betting, that rich parallelogram outlined by Oxford Street, Baker Street, Marylebone Road, and Edgware Road.

The colossal ramifications of street betting in England go unsuspected by the average citizen, who conducts his wagers like a gentleman over His Majesty's telephones, telegraphs, and mails. On a pitch so productive and extensive as Ted's the takings in sixpences and half-crowns may amount to hundreds of pounds a day, and the proportion of losing bets, with clients whose knowledge of horses is limited to seeing them between the shafts of a milk float or a Corporation dust-cart, is, from the bookmaker's point of view, comfortably small.

Such fertile territory does not long remain undisputed, and to prevent ambitious rivals from 'muscling in' on it may be as tough a process as capturing it in the first place.

The tsar of such a domain must be a dominant, combative personality. He must have a long-standing, intimate acquaintance with the underworld of London—which, by the way, does *not* exist only in novels—he must be able to bribe with an easy assurance those whose business it is to stand in his way, and, above all, he must have that rare type of mentality that remains quite unimpressed by the handling of large sums of money.

Ted Durling had them all—but a lot more besides. In his way he was the most picturesque figure I ever came to know intimately. We moved in entirely different spheres of life, and perhaps that was part of the basis of our friendship. His knowledge of London, its people, and its undercurrents, was quite extraordinary. He would have made a wonderful journalist.

Whenever, in the course of my profession, I wanted the 'low-down' on some new activity in the town, Ted was an unfailing source of information. If he hadn't it offhand, he 'd say: 'Meet me for a drink at seven and I 'll tell you then.' He 'd arrive with the whole thing set out from A to Z—names of the principals, their past history, what they were making out of it. He had contacts everywhere. He was the answer to the journalist's prayer.

When, years ago, they raided a place called the Caravan Club in Long Acre and found indescribable things going on, I was commissioned to write an article on the various 'dives' still existing in London, against which the Caravan was mere child's play. Ted commended me to a Big Shot who ruled a territory south of the river. What this man couldn't show me, it seemed, wasn't worth seeing.

I met him by appointment at a dog track—a fat, heavy-jowled man with a fine fat cigar, surrounded by 'the boys.' I was driving at that time a big American car with an almost unbelievable acceleration (nought to sixty in thirteen seconds). The Big Shot was driven about in a fairly ancient Chrysler by a sinister little chap in a black hat and long overcoat. It was arranged that he should lead the way as far as Westminster Bridge, at which point I should overtake him and drive on to leave my car in the Temple, where I was then living.

The man in the black hat having stated that he would go slowly in case we lost each other, there followed what seemed to me like a Continental Grand Prix through the streets of London. On the run to Westminster Bridge Nuvolari himself could hardly have given ten seconds to this young Jehu. At the agreed spot

he waved me nonchalantly by, and I set out to give him an equally good run for his money. I got away to a terrific start and shot down the Embankment at a speed I should hesitate to record. A taxi pulled out to avoid some red lamps in the road centre and for a moment I wavered. I heard a roar on my left, and that, until we reached the Temple, was all I saw of the black hat.

Later, as I sat in the back of the Chrysler with the Big Shot, making our way down the Clerkenwell Road with the urgency of a fire engine, I remarked that his driver seemed to waste little time. 'He drives fast—but he 's a good boy,' said the Big Shot. I wondered what the boy could do when he was really trying. No wonder the police in those days had to buy a fleet of Invictas.

As for the dozen clubs we visited that evening, I think they might have opened the eyes even of a hardened crime reporter, which is saying something, but they are things of the past. Frankly, they were nauseating rather than sensational or spectacular, and have no place in this digression. I was talking about my friend, Ted Durling.

So far as I know, he boasted no academic learning, but his mastery of figures would have staggered an Oxford don. His prices ruled the ring at London's principal dog-racing tracks, which means that afternoon and evening, eight races a meeting, often six days a week, he stood to be shot at, matching his wits against the sharpest intellects in the sharpest of professions. His opponents could plot and plan their coups for weeks ahead. Ted had to take on all comers without notice.

The technical ups and downs of betting require a specialized mentality which, in common with ninety-nine out of a hundred, I do not possess. Having had them described to me a dozen times by Ted in the language of a child's primer, I still flounder helplessly in a maze of taking seven hundred to four hundred on one dog and laying three-fifty to one-fifty on another, and saving a bit by letting another run out to a hundred to eight, and then laying off what you 've taken on the first dog, thereby in some mysterious way affecting the price of the fourth, hitherto unmentioned.

In the hurly-burly of the seven or eight minutes of active betting before each race, Ted Durling would glance over his shoulder, and in perhaps five seconds master the details and significance of six columns of pencilled figures on his clerk's sheet,

running into some hundreds of pounds. He struck me sometimes as being on a par with those mathematical freaks who at a moment's notice will multiply 876,454,321 by 596,951,637 in their heads and tell you the correct answer—or what you assume to be the correct answer. They can't tell you how they arrived at the answer. They just know it *is* the answer. Ted was the same. He had had no training in mathematics. 'I suppose it just comes to some people that way, and I 'm one of them,' he used to say.

If you have been to the dogs at Harringay or the White City, you may not have recognized Ted Durling, but you certainly heard his voice. He cast it like a ventriloquist on a higher pitch than his competitors. It carried through the babel across the neighbouring rings; it penetrated the big sheet-glass windows of the restaurant. It was the envy and despair of his rivals.

The familiar way in which racing men handle ready money never fails to impress me. I played golf with Ted one morning and won ten shillings. In order to pay he produced, from the special pockets in the front of his trousers, two compressed bundles of large dishevelled white notes, which flew open in his palm. There were a few green notes among them—but no ten-shillings.

'How much are you carrying there?' I asked.

'Oh, about £1,250,' he replied.

The best of them make mistakes—and in that line of life mistakes cost money. One day Ted was commissioned to put £300 on a dog. By a slip of the tongue he put it on the wrong dog. The right dog won, at four to one, and Ted had to pay out £1,200, plus the original £300. What 's in a name? In this case fifteen hundred pounds.

Like all top-flight bookmakers Ted was a master of psychology. You have to be, but he once had a bitter lesson in the folly of letting emotion override business.

He was laying eight to one against a dog. A man he disliked intensely came up to him. 'Four hundred to fifty?' 'Yes,' said Ted, 'and seeing it 's you, you ——, you can have it twice if you want.'

'All right then, I will,' said the other man, thoroughly riled. A minute later the dog had won. There was no time to 'straighten out' the book and this little display of personal feeling cost Ted £400. Still, when you are making or 'doing' anything up to a thousand pounds every night of the week—no self-respecting bookmaker ever 'loses' money; he has always 'done' it—I suppose it doesn't matter.

Ted Durling was a loyal and generous friend, and all manner of men, from dukes to desperadoes, mourned for him when he died.

'WHO 'S GOING TO BE SECOND?'

If I were cast up on a desert island, which the Lord defer, and were permitted to choose one man as my companion in exile, I sometimes think I should call for that great philosopher and good companion, Walter Hagen.

The prospect of being cast upon a desert island with a golfer is one to fill the mind with a horrid anticipation. But to Hagen, third greatest golf player of all time, golf was only a means to an end. He used it as Gene Tunney used prize-fighting, and as Henry Cotton, as I think you will find, will turn out to have used golf.

Hagen was bigger than the game by which he rose to fame. In any walk of life into which he might have drifted he 'd have been a success. He probably stuck to golf because it brought him with the least trouble the things he most desired from life—wealth, luxury, travel, the limelight, and the company of famous men—and women, on level terms.

That he made a million dollars from golf is certain. It is equally certain that he will not die a rich man. 'Easy come, easy go,' was Hagen's motto with money, and maybe he was right.

My own affection for Hagen, whose name, incidentally, rhymes with 'pagan,' not with 'jargon,' bordered almost on hero-worship. What a character! Staggering self-assurance; wit and good humour; a bronzed, impudent countenance with a wide-open smile; inexhaustible zest for life; and a unique ability to combine wine, women, and song with the serious business of winning golf championships—that was Hagen. A fellow whose like you meet once in a lifetime.

His golf exactly matched his personality. Often brilliant; never, never dull. He won the open championship of this country four times and of his own United States twice, and he made more bad shots in doing so than the man who finished

second would make in a month. He finished at the top because his powers of recovery were almost superhuman. When he won his first championship at Sandwich, he went through six rounds without taking a six, yet four times he was still in a bunker beside the green in three.

It was only natural that such a man should capture the imagination of the crowd. At first they resented his swagger and his multi-hued attire. On one regrettable occasion in the early days they even clapped when he missed a shot. But that soon passed when they came to understand the real Hagen, and long after he was past his prime they flocked round with him like sheep.

He took them through all the emotions. He would play a succession of holes as though divinely inspired, while they marvelled at his skill. Then from a clear sky would come a stroke of unbelievable inaccuracy—a wild slice, or a 'top,' or a quick, semicircular hook—and the heart of the duffer warmed to the god that could descend to the level of man. And then, when all was apparently lost, he would extricate himself with a recovery which to the faithful seemed nothing less than a miracle.

Where other men strove vainly for consistent perfection, it was part of Hagen's philosophy, typically enough, to expect his quota of downright bad shots in every round he played. He expected them—so they did not upset him, as they did the others, when they came.

He was, of course, the showman *par excellence*—the master golfer-entertainer. No matinée idol ever had a stronger hold on his audience. I recall a tournament at Porthcawl, when his days of winning championships were already over. Hagen, still in London, was informed that he was to be partnered next day with a certain British Ryder Cup player and that they were to start at 10.30 a.m.

'I 'll start at three,' said Walter.

He is the only man in the game who would not have been disqualified. Instead, they meekly replied: 'Very well, you shall start at three.'

Word went round the little town, and no one bothered to watch the morning play. They stored their energy for the afternoon. The master arrived in a huge Daimler saloon—I can see him now—seated in the small space left by a number of cabin trunks. He had his feet up, and genially waved a large cigar. In the front seat sat his sixteen-year-old son, Junior.

Hagen knew he had not the remotest chance of winning the

tournament. So did every one else. But did that make any difference? Not a bit. Every spectator on the course was there at three to see him drive off. They followed him eagerly to the end. He took eighty-one.

Next day they were there again. Hagen by this time had no chance of even qualifying for the final day's play, but who cared? He played deplorably and again took eighty-one. Every one was happy. They had seen Hagen play golf.

Next morning three young women he had met in Porthcawl were to give him a lift to Cardiff. At twelve o'clock they were still fluttering about the hotel lounge, sending messages begging him to hurry. 'He 's in his bath,' said Junior. 'He can't be,' they replied; 'he was in his bath at eleven o'clock.' Junior's reply seemed nicely to sum up his father. 'Gee, you don't know Pop,' he said. '*He 'd do anything.*' It was one o'clock before he appeared.

Incidentally, Hagen kept a firm hand on his offspring, who, with a tip-tilted nose and long hair brushed straight back off his forehead, was very much a chip of the old block. The boy at heart had all his father's impudence and arrogance, but Hagen took great trouble to see that the exterior was highly polished. The boy's manners were perfect. He even called me 'sir.'

Hagen was the dandy of the links. 'Sir Walter,' they called him. His clothes were immaculate, if sometimes a trifle bizarre according to Savile Row conceptions, and frequently he 'd change his whole outfit at lunch-time. I think he 'd as soon have scratched as appear in clothes that offended his sartorial eye.

Was it vanity? Twenty-five per cent of it, maybe. The rest was a part of his astute sense of publicity. He knew that making money from golf did not depend only on winning the titles. It depended on being noticed, talked about, quoted, criticized—anything, in fact, but ignored.

It wasn't only natural indolence that made him late wherever he went. He liked to set the world asking: 'Where 's Hagen?' Had he arrived? Would he be disqualified? By the time he appeared, the stage was set for his entrance, his name on every one's lips. 'Ah, there he is! Good old Walter!' In all the times I watched him play, I never knew him reach the first tee before his opponent.

I remember a perfect example of his technique when a photograph was to be taken of the Ryder Cup team, of which he was captain. The players were assembled on the terrace, among

them Hagen. I saw him slip quietly away to the clubhouse. I followed him in and watched him settle down to a conversation in the locker-room. Five minutes later every soul in the place was saying: 'Hagen. Where 's Hagen?' The stage was set and Walter emerged, beaming, into his self-created limelight.

Hagen had—and I suppose I must use the past tense, for though he 's only forty-eight now, the days of his glory are past—an overwhelming confidence in his own powers. 'Waal, who 's gonna be second?' he would drawl as he strolled out to the first tee. Then he would win—and win against the best competition the world could offer. His imitators cried: 'Who 's going to be second?' and then finished twentieth.

Innumerable tales, some of them true, are told of his irrepressible self-assurance. Perhaps the most characteristic concerns the finish of his Hoylake championship. He frittered the shots away in his last round and was out in 40 or 41. At any rate, he had to come home in 36, and knew it, to beat Ernest Whitcombe's total of 302—and there is no tougher finish in the world than the last five holes at Hoylake.

He got by the tenth with a four and drove into a bunker at the Alps (the short eleventh). He blasted it out and holed the putt. Bunkered again at the twelfth, he holed a whopper for his four. Then his tee shot to the short thirteenth floated away into the sand, and that, surely, was the end. There were no strokes to be picked up on the last five holes, even by Hagen, and a four at the thirteenth must cost him the championship. He flipped the ball neatly out to within a few feet and got his three.

And so he came to the seventeenth needing two fours to win the Open. At the seventeenth he played what must stand as one of the greatest iron shots of all time, a long, low shot that ran nimbly through the narrow opening and lay eight feet from the hole. A three there would clinch it—but he rolled the ball casually along and missed it. Four to win! Every man in Hoylake, and half Liverpool, as it seemed, crowded round the last green. Watchers craned their necks from every window.

Hagen hit his second shot right over the back into the long grass. His approach, not bad in the circumstances, ran within eight or nine feet of the hole. One putt to win!

Where most men would have spent an age in preparation, Hagen strolled up to his putt and with scarcely a preliminary glance ran it into the hole.

As he walked from the green, having duly been embraced by his wife, a colleague of mine said to him: 'You seemed to treat that putt very casually, Hagen. Did you know you had it to win?'

'Sure, I knew I had it to win,' drawled Walter, 'but no man ever beat *me* in a play-off!'

Then again they 'll tell you the tale of how Hagen was left with a long putt to tie with Leo Diegel for a tournament in America and insisted that Diegel should be summoned from the clubhouse to see him hole it—to be suitably impressed before the play-off on the following day. Of course he holed it.

The only trouble about this tale, which I have been told by several people who actually saw it happen, is that they saw it happen at several different clubs and the other man was not always Diegel.

All the same I fancy that Hagen must have holed more crucial putts *deliberately* than any man who ever won a championship. Indeed, I recall no instance on which, in his prime, he missed one that he knew would win or lose him a title. Yet he was never a man to waste effort. The rich streak of idleness in his make-up saw to that. Thus when, at Muirfield in 1929, he was left with a putt of four feet to win the open championship, he missed it by inches. So great was his lead that he could have taken seven putts and still have won. But not a man doubted that he would have holed that putt if the title had hung on it.

They do say that Hagen that day played the greatest golf ever seen in the Open. On the previous day in calm weather he had gone round in sixty-seven, the lowest score hitherto recorded in a championship, and one which prompted a friend of mine to send a wire to the green committee of the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, in other words the Muirfield club, saying: '*Suggest play off back tees for remainder of championship.*'

On the final day there blew a mighty gale. Scores shot into the eighties and all day the best round was seventy-four. But the gale only showed Hagen as the supreme artist, a man who could juggle with a golf ball as though it were tied to a string. He produced from somewhere a mallet-headed, deep-faced driver, and they say that for thirty-six holes he steered his ball along within twenty feet of the ground. Cannily, craftily, he was round twice in seventy-five. Starting two strokes behind Diegel, he finished six shots ahead of the field.

As for the rules of training and physical fitness, Hagen defied

the lot of them. He was the only man who could stay up till three in the morning playing bridge, smoking cigars, and stoking up with whisky, and go out and win a championship in the morning. Others tried, and great was their downfall. His power of concentration, too, was exceptional. Even in the closing stages of a tournament, when a false step might cost a thousand pounds or more, he could converse with his friends as he walked along between shots, breaking off suddenly when he came to within a few yards of his ball and switching his mind completely over to the business in hand. The only thing I ever knew to put him off was when, at Sandwich, they told him the Prince of Wales had arrived to watch him. He topped his next shot forty yards. Then he pitched up and holed his putt for a four.

It was at Sandwich that he made perhaps the most famous of all Hagen gestures. Having won the open championship of Great Britain he handed the first prize, then a meagre £50, straight to his caddie. He knew he could cash in on the title for thousands of dollars in America. As for the caddie, he died some years later, and his friends have told me that, following the celebrations with Hagen's cheque, he was never the same man again.

Walter's first love, they tell me, was baseball, and he might have made a great pitcher. Later he became crazy on shooting and fishing, both of which sports he pursued with the eager enthusiasm of a boy with a catapult, and big game hunting, in which he indulged as a sideline during his golfing tours round the world.

I remember sitting in the lounge of a Carnoustie hotel at half-past one in the morning during the 1937 championship, when in walked Hagen with a basket under his arm. In it were half a dozen trout. He was lying well up in the championship, but that had not stopped him driving seventy miles for an evening's fishing. He took the fish down to the kitchen, gutted them, and solemnly cooked them for his supper.

Two of his matches over here will never be forgotten. One will never be forgiven. It was in 1928 that he stepped off the boat and went straight to play Archie Compston over seventy-two holes for, it was said, £500. He was out of practice after the voyage, and was beaten by the staggering margin of eighteen up and seventeen to play, an all-time record. A lesser man would have struggled to keep the margin of defeat down to

reasonable proportions. Hagen, I suspect, when he saw he could not win, saw to it that the margin was so colossal that the world would discount the result of the match. Be that as it may, the following week he went down to Sandwich and won the championship. Compston was third.

The other match, against Abe Mitchell in 1926, brought all manner of abuse on his head and added a phrase to the English golfer's vocabulary—'doing a Hagen,' in other words, keeping a man waiting for the purpose of putting him off. In the first thirty-six holes at Wentworth Mitchell finished four up. The second was played at St. George's Hill, and Hagen was half an hour late, a circumstance to which Mitchell's friends, though not so far as I know Mitchell himself, ascribed his ultimate defeat by 2 and 1. Hagen said his driver lost his way in the fog, and, indeed, St George's Hill is difficult enough to find on a clear day. Hagen's record for being habitually late makes it likely that, as usual, he had simply not bothered to get there in time. I doubt if he had any ulterior motive. In any case I always think the suggestion that Hagen won this match almost by cheating reflects at least as badly on Mitchell. It portrays him as a man of such meagre calibre as to lose six clear holes in a day for no better reason than that the match started half an hour after the advertised time. I don't believe it. Be that as it may, it took Hagen years to live the incident down.

Life has been very much the richer for having known Hagen. He was the most colourful, spectacular personality cast up by the game of golf, and will take his place in sporting history with the giants—with 'W. G.,' Jack Dempsey, Fred Archer. Their statistical records may have been surpassed, but they stay on their pedestals, men who became legends in their own lifetime.

MADDING MASSES

THE student of crowd psychology and the herd instinct—a subject on which I must one day write what Mr Sherlock Holmes would term a 'trifling monograph'—could find no better field for his observations than a golf course, preferably in Scotland or the north of England, on the occasion of a modern championship.

Only since the Great War have newspaper editors turned golf

from a leisurely, 'gentlemanly' pastime into 'news.' The process has been intensified until nowadays the champion golfers take their place in the limelight as national figures on a par with the Hobbses and the Bradmans. Their incomes, their private affairs, their clothes, their domestic arrangements, have become a matter of, apparently, dominant interest. Until the war each newspaper had its, happily for myself, highly paid golf correspondent: *The Times* even had a couple of second strings too.

So it is not to be wondered at that the golfing 'Wimbledons' attract in their thousands folk who a few years ago would never have contemplated visiting a golf course. And very good fun they find it. They like the carefree way in which they can turn up without booking a seat and can sit in the sunshine, maybe, on a bank of wild flowers, while the players perform in succession before them. They like the fresh air and the exercise (though there are times when one could wish that some of them were not quite so fond of exercise) and they like the intimate nature of the game, wherein they can walk within a yard or two of the champion, perhaps even touch the hem of his garment, and peer curiously at the bag of clubs which that very day is winning him more than a year of their own income. Sometimes the great man may actually address a word or two to them, and then, even if those words are no more than 'Stand back!' they are in the seventh heaven of reflected glory.

The problem of directing to their numbered seats the ninety thousand persons who watch a Wembley Cup Final is as nothing compared with the problem of marshalling and shepherding five thousand people who are constantly on the move. They have paid their half-crowns to see Cotton, and Cotton they are going to see.

In Scotland, where the golf course is often in the heart of the town and the veriest grandmother can run like a partridge, St Andrews, Prestwick, Troon, and Carnoustie turn out the biggest crowds. In England, I imagine, Southport has that distinction. When the Ryder Cup matches between the British and American professionals are played at Southport, the local golfers turn out in battalions armed with long bamboo poles with pennants on the end, for all the world like the Bengal Lancers, and endeavour to control their less knowledgeable fellow citizens.

They work wonders, but sometimes they are not wholly successful—as, for instance, when Arthur Lacey was playing Walter Hagen. Lacey's ball soared over the sandhills at a blind hole and came to rest beside a gentleman in a mackintosh. Without hesitation the man bent down and popped the ball in his pocket. Never did you hear such a commotion. The man set off at a smart pace, pursued as it seemed by the whole of Lancashire shouting: 'Stop him! There he goes!' He flung the ball down in the rough, as a man throws his last scrap of food to stay the pursuit of a pack of wolves, but he was later surrounded. I don't think they lynched him.

On the same day Tom Webster was wandering beside a deserted green. Elsewhere ten thousand people were scrambling, panting, and shouting at each other in their efforts to see the play, or picnicking on the fairways, or refreshing themselves at the beer tents. But here all was at peace. One of the Bengal Lancers was resting from his labours, and, walking round the bank at the back of the green, was a Lancastrian in a bowler hat, scrambling to preserve his balance on the slippery sun-baked grass. The lancer glared at the Lancastrian with the assertiveness of a man who carries a flag of authority but once in two years. '*Don't do that, man,*' he said. '*You're spoiling everything!*'

In Scotland they go the whole hog—they have to—and employ brawny men with white coats and barrack-square voices at ten bob a day to roar at the crowds in language that the dimmest intelligence must understand. I witnessed a comic little incident with one of these fellows during a championship final at Troon. The steward, an old Scottish caddie, had been assigned the job of keeping the third fairway clear. At the time in question the match was half a mile away, but his not to reason why, his job was to keep that fairway clear.

An inoffensive little man was walking along a few yards from the rough. The steward roared at him, waving his flag. The little man in turn drew a red flag from under his mackintosh.

'*Huff you!*' he said, and passed on.

The 'showman' instinct in the champions is buoyed up by the presence of a big crowd. Sometimes I think the only certain way of causing Walter Hagen to lose the championships he used to win, would have been to make him play round the course alone, while the crowds flocked round with his rivals.

All the same, spectators in the mass impose a tremendous additional strain. I once took two photographs of Cotton playing the fifteenth hole during a Ryder Cup match at Southport, the first as he played the shot, the second about six seconds later. With the game at a critical stage and with every nerve

straining to get on with it and get it over, he had had to wait at least four minutes on the tee while the scurrying throng was shepherded to points of vantage round the hole. Then, the moment the ball left his club the whole crowd made a dash for a ringside seat beside the green. In the second picture he was completely engulfed. He and his caddie had been pushed and jostled and trampled upon. Worse, he had no idea where his ball had finished. What awaited him? Was he sitting pretty with nothing to worry about? Or had his ball rolled into a bunker? in which case he should now have been steeling his mind to the crisis.

The worst pest is the fellow who, when the fairway has finally been cleared and the player is about to drive, scurries across from one side to the other like a child playing 'last across the road'; or the little man who must at all costs be seen speaking to the hero of the hour, little caring that the poor chap is trying desperately to pin his concentration on the business in hand. The classic tale of this type of mentality, common in all walks of life, is of the man who came up to a very celebrated player at a critical moment and said: 'You don't remember me?'

'To tell the truth I 'm afraid I don't,' replied the great man courteously (their patience is astonishing).

'Well, you remember when you played that match at So-and-so?'

'Yes.'

'And you remember that stroke of yours over the trees at the fifteenth? Well, I was the man who shouted "Good shot!" '

Apocryphal perhaps, but no exaggeration of what professional golfers have to put up with. They certainly earn their money.

For myself I have played many dozens of times in front of a crowd, that term being defined as any number of persons, from half a dozen upwards, who find it worth while to walk round with the match; and I can honestly record that I have only once been put off by their presence. In the circumstances you may feel, charitably, that this was understandable.

It was a match at Langley Park, near Beckenham, a year or so before the war, in aid of a local hospital, and I was partnered with Henry Cotton against Dr J. Flaherty and W. T. Twine. In its humble way the match was a 'natural.' Dr Flaherty and Twine, Langley Park professional, had twice won the Addington Foursomes (a kind of amateur-professional foursomes championship) and were the present holders. Cotton, whatever

the occasion, drew spectators by the hundred. I added my little quota, since my *Evening Standard* contributions were being widely read at the time and people came along to see if the fellow could practise what he preached.

The sun shone invitingly and when the time came for me to make the opening stroke about twelve hundred people lined the first fairway. I tee'd my ball with a steady hand and persuaded the good folk surrounding the tee to move back just far enough to let me swing the club. A narrow lane of peering faces stretched forward for forty yards in front of us. The two sides of the lane cannot have been more than fifteen yards apart—a quick hook or slice meant Death in the Afternoon. Still that did not deter me. I had no reason yet to anticipate a quick hook or slice.

I opened with a very reasonable stroke, with a nice shade of 'draw' to hold it up to the left-hand side of the fairway, which happened to be the proper line to the hole. And then the fun began.

The ball, as it happened, finished a few yards from the edge of the fairway in the well-cut semi-rough on the left—in normal circumstances an excellent spot. But these were not normal circumstances, for the semi-rough was alive with spectators and no sooner had the ball left the club than half the world began to yell 'Fore,' 'Look out on the left,' and such like, while the other half cast itself face downward on the ground as though being machine-gunned from the air.

Then Cotton drove, and his shot was almost a replica of mine, about fifteen yards longer. 'Look out!' yelled the chorus, and on both sides of the course the company cast itself on the ground. Flaherty hit one up the middle, but Twine produced a high, floating slice that carried right over the heads of the people on the right. The din caused by this one was positively alarming.

Partnering Cotton in one of these shows is particularly disconcerting. You know only too well that people have turned out to see him, not yourself, and the very certainty of his own play tends to give his partner the feeling, 'What 's the use of my wasting every one's time struggling to do the hole in four, when he 'll probably do it in three anyway.'

I missed the green, I remember, with a hurried second shot, and when I came to play my third I found the green already ringed six deep with spectators. So I picked up my ball and said no more about it.

At the second hole my ball finished precisely a foot from the fairway, but again the rough was thick with people and the yelling that went on was more formidable than ever. After that I gave up all thought of hitting the ball far. All I prayed for was to hit it *silent*.

Worse was to come. I had been writing a series of articles about a club called a sand-iron, the details of which we needn't go into at the moment. Suffice to say that the club makes recoveries from bunkers pretty well foolproof if used the right way. At a short hole Cotton missed the green on the left, I was bunkered on the right. I stood in the sand in ominous silence, surrounded by hundreds of curious eyes. Then I heard a voice.

'*That's the club he says you can't miss with*,' it said.

After that, I don't mind admitting I was mightily relieved to see that shot go on the green. We won the match by one hole. Cotton went round in sixty-eight and I came in exactly once.

Why more people are not injured at golf matches I never can tell. Time and again, perhaps fifty or a hundred times in a season, I 'd see a ball pitch at the end of a 250-yard flight in a mass of spectators; yet never, it seemed, were they injured. In the match of which I was speaking, Twine alone failed to strike someone. I saw my own ball bounce back on to a green from an elderly woman's head, while Cotton hit a man on the back of the neck.

I wrote a light-hearted article about these incidents. Next day I received a letter from a member of Langley Park. 'You mention that you bagged one spectator—a lady,' it read. 'At the fourteenth, where you pulled your drive round towards a large tree bordering the fourteenth and fifteenth fairways, you bagged another victim—myself.

'The blow was not severe, although friends standing several yards away heard the crack. . . .'

The victim was confined to bed for some three weeks with 'delayed concussion,' but he was extremely nice about it and the affair ended amicably with his selling me a golfer's insurance policy!

DEATH IN THE FOREST

'To-morrow,' said Valentine Viscount Castlerosse one bright September day in Killarney, 'you will go deer-stalking.'

I have tried for myself, or casually witnessed, most of the recognized sports of Great Britain. Here was one that had passed me by. In common with the average citizen I had dismissed deer-stalking as the pastime of wealthy men wearing odd hats shaped the same at both ends.

We set off in single file up the mountains which, with the lakes of Killarney, make one of the loveliest pictures in all the world. An impressive retinue, as I remember thinking. His lordship, vast and perspiring, propelling himself with his thumb in the cleft of a tall hawthorn stick; myself; Matt Lyne, keeper of the forest, with rifle and telescope; John Lyne, also with rifle and telescope; and a fifth man carrying a small pail like a jam jar.

The significance of this pail was, to me, a mystery, and I hesitated to display my ignorance by asking. Later I discovered that it contained the ice for his lordship's whisky and soda.

For an hour we climbed up through the woods, till at last the trees gave place to the craggy, barren mountain tops that are the last stronghold of the wild deer. We sat down beside the path to refresh ourselves and scanned the distant slopes for a sign of our quarry. For myself, as I surveyed the wondrous loveliness of the scene, I should have been content not to spot a deer all day.

At first glance it seemed that this would be so, but the eyes of the men who spend their lives in the hills see things that are invisible to us who grope for our daily bread in the cities of the plain.

Matt and John Lyne fell to discussion. Not whether any deer were to be seen, but which of the deer that both had already detected offered the best opportunity for attack. They could tell a young stag from an old with the naked eye. To me they were no more than microscopic, reddish-brown specks on the hill-side.

A plan of campaign was instituted whereby Matt and I should make a detour of about two miles over the boulders and bog to get down-wind from a stag on the far hill-side, while Castlerosse, John, and the man with the pail ensconced themselves beside the path farther on.

I soon discovered that the country, apparently so barren of life,

was in fact alive with Japanese deer—Japs, as they call them—speckled, large-eyed, graceful little creatures, and the enemy of the deer-stalker only in the sense that they warn the main quarry of his approach.

The first excitement occurred when we surprised a buck of this species—they stand about the height of a Shetland pony, with two pointed horns—but though we cast ourselves to the ground, he was away before I could do anything more aggressive than take a picture of his retreating rump.

We trudged on for perhaps three-quarters of an hour, making all manner of minor detours to prevent showing ourselves to the stag we were stalking, and then came the Moment. Prostrate on our bellies, we crept to the top of a small rise, and peered through the fringe of grass.

Not a beast in sight. The deer had vanished.

"'Tis those damned Japs,' said Matt.

After one or two further short sallies we returned to our base, where a silvery tinkle of ice showed that his lordship was already finding the heat oppressive. Refreshment was taken and further plans laid.

These consisted in Matt and I getting on the march again, this time to the summit of the mountain that towered behind us. 'Certain to be deer up there somewhere,' it was said.

It was not long before we sighted another buck and set out to stalk him with another long detour that took us downwards to the fringe of the forest (in the purely aboreal sense: why the barren hills on which the deer live should be termed a deer 'forest' I have never gathered). As we crept on, I began to appreciate the unique fascination in the art of stalking. Here was something not to be compared with the rich man's pastime of mowing down pheasants and grouse. This had the real, primeval element of the chase—the battle of wits between the skill, patience, and persistence of the hunter and the naturally endowed wariness and fleetness of foot of the hunted. And the two, it seemed to me, were pretty evenly matched.

The pheasant, hand-fed with corn till the morning of execution, then levered off the ground by the beaters, has little chance against the marksmanship of a practised shot. The stag, on the other hand, has every chance. His sense of smell is so keen that no creature can approach him undetected from up-wind. His hearing is acute, and with his eyes he can detect the movement of a man's cap in the grass half a mile away. In fact, if he so much as suspects the presence of the hunter, he wins.

Stalking demands infinite patience and a certain degree of low cunning—the mentality of the man who, in the Great War, would lie all day in no man's land, disguised with a covering of branches and old tins cans and sniping at the enemy, rather than that of the man who more willingly rushed over the top with his bayonet.

There are two canons of etiquette which all good stalkers observe. One is: Never fire at a moving beast; the other is: Never fire till you are well in range. In other words, once you have stalked your stag so successfully as to get him standing still, unaware of your presence, within, say, a maximum of two hundred yards, the rest should be a merely mechanical formality.

And that presupposes that the stalker is a first-class shot with a rifle. If he isn't, he has no business to be stalking at all, for the prospect of leaving a wounded stag to a lingering death on the hill-side is not one that appeals to many of us. The vital target on a stag is a spot only nine or ten inches wide, and not clearly defined like an artificial target in black and white, just behind the foreleg. And when you 've been creeping on all fours, crawling on your belly, leaping from one rock to the next, and all the time toiling up a mountain-side; and when the suspended excitement of perhaps two hours' endeavour comes at last to a head as you rest the rifle on a rock and draw a bead on your quarry, that vital spot becomes very small indeed.

Your heart thumps wildly and your hand is trembling. A little voice whispers: 'Suppose you miss it now!'

I hope I shall not be considered unduly vain if I declare that if there 's one thing that I *can* do it is shoot with a rifle. It 's an art that a few people will never master, but for the vast majority it is just a question of practice. I started at the age of nine and have kept my hand in ever since. That 's all there is to it.

And so, when at last Matt and I got within range of our buck, at perhaps a hundred and eighty yards, I began to wish that I had had time to have a sighter or two with this rifle before we had started. Should I advance the sights from 100 to 200 yards and aim a bit low—or leave them at 100 and take a full sight on the bull's-eye—or leave them as they were and take a normal aim? A couple of preliminary shots would have told me, but there had been no time for preliminaries and now I had to guess.

I guessed wrong. I put up the sights, aimed low, and fired. The bullet ricocheted from a rock an inch or two above the

animal's back, and it made off with great speed across the mountain. I, too, was extremely wild.

The shot, echoing across the valley, disturbed a herd of deer, which ran providentially within range of his lordship. To my intense mortification he shot one neatly through the heart. We returned to find him standing over his victim, and while Matt got out his jack-knife and set about the gory operation of 'paunching' the stag, I had to confess my own unhappy tale.

By this time a man had turned up with a pony, the stag was duly heaved on to its back, and the party set off for home. Having climbed, as it seemed, up and down every mountain in Kerry, I was stiff and aching in every joint. On the following Sunday Castlerosse's 'Londoner's Log' in the *Sunday Express* concluded:

'Finally, Mr Longhurst has been out stalking. He started the day most jauntily and finished nobly, and yet when 8.30 p.m. struck, namely, the dinner hour, I said: "Where is Mr Longhurst?" and received the reply that "Mr Longhurst is trying to get down the stairs." '

Next morning I procured a rough and ready target and fired a dozen sighters at it in the ancestral park. That day, having got the hang of the rifle, I shot three buck. But still no stag.

For two hours we had trailed a herd of deer. I swear they never saw us, but some sixth sense must have warned them that danger was in the air, for whenever we approached within range they would canter nimbly across the mountain for another mile. At last we reclined on a ledge, thoroughly exhausted, and contemplated throwing in our hand for the day. I took a despairing photograph of the deer as they grazed on a neighbouring hill.

Then an astonishing thing happened. We had been lying there perhaps for a quarter of an hour, talking of this and that and marvelling at the beauty of the scene, when, looking down from our rock, we perceived the whole herd strolling casually along the path below us. There must have been twenty or so, with half a dozen stags, and they can't have been more than a hundred yards away. As I peered down on them from our ledge, I felt as the tribesman on the North-West Frontier must feel as he lies in ambush for the column winding its way up the mountain pass below.

I picked a stag and waited till he was moving almost directly away from us, and therefore, for aiming purposes, was pretty well stationary. The bullet hit the creature with an audible

thud, square in the backbone, and after a few more paces it tottered and fell. There seemed to be life in it, so I asked Matt whether I should dispatch it with another.

'No,' said he, 'he 'll not rise again.'

As we rose to our feet, so did the stag. Limping away, it disappeared slowly round the side of the hill.

'Never mind,' said Matt, 'he 'll not go fifty yards.'

But he did go fifty yards, and for all I know he is going still. We searched high and low for that stag, but at last we had to give in. I had committed the unforgivable crime. I had hit a stag without killing it. The bullet must have struck a bone, concussed the animal, and bounced off. All the same I felt very guilty.

On the following morning we climbed to a neighbouring forest, and there encountered one of the most remarkable little men I ever did meet. Dan Donohue was his name, and seventy-nine was his age. He lived in a primitive little cottage high up in the Kenmare forest, and had been keeper of the forest for more than half a century, and his father before him.

A wizened, round-faced little man with a high-pitched, singsong voice that was difficult to understand. He was the best stalker in all Ireland, I was told. Having lived in the forest all his life, I believe he knew more of the ways of deer than the ways of men.

We spent a barren, tantalizing morning, but why should I worry? I had passed that morning in the presence of a genius in his craft. The spectator needs no technical knowledge of the sport he watches to be able to detect the touch of genius. Bill Tilden, Bobby Jones, Walter Hagen, Jack Hobbs, Alex James, and Dan's namesake, Steve Donoghue, they all had that little something that, whether they were winning or losing, proclaimed from the house-tops that they were not as other men.

At seventy-nine Dan Donohue had the eyes of a hawk and the agility of a mountain goat. Furthermore, it proved impossible to tire him. When, as dusk fell, we tottered gratefully into the motor car, he set off at the same lively pace on the three-mile trek up to his cottage.

Half a century younger, it was all I could do to keep up with him. He leapt from rock to rock without pausing, using his stick in the most uncanny manner as a kind of third leg.

It was almost at the top of the highest mountain in the forest that the *grand succès* was at last accomplished. We overtook our

quarry, a big solitary stag, standing majestic and unaware in a glen below us. I squirmed my way down to the point where a ledge of rock jutted out over the glen, and knew that the moment had come.

I drew a bead on the stag. Then, instead of pulling the trigger, I laid down the rifle and gazed at this magnificent creature I was about to kill. Death seemed a monstrous penalty to exact for his negligence. We had won the game, according to the rules, and had crept successfully upon him without revealing our presence. Who was I to say that the beast should die?

Here was no mere verminous rabbit or sparrow or pigeon, no enemy of man, but a noble specimen of God's handiwork—the Monarch, indeed, of the Glen! My mind was a turmoil of opposing emotions. I could kill him, that was certain. He was nearly two hundred yards away, but I knew that I should not miss. A squeeze of the trigger and the deed would be done.

Had I been alone I should have taken a photograph of the beast to prove my victory and let him go. But faced with the prospect of explaining away such faint-hearted unorthodoxy to my host, and more especially, to old Dan, my courage deserted me. I raised the rifle again and a second later the stag was dead.

As it fell, there rose from the grass beside it a second stag. I shot that too. And I knew how the Ancient Mariner felt when he shot the albatross.

Dan Donohue was beside himself. '*Good*, gentleman, *good*,' he kept saying. We went down to examine the victims and found that the first was a 'royal,' in other words it had twelve points to its antlers, and this was indeed a memorable début, for to shoot a royal ranks high among deer-stalkers—though, as I imprudently pointed out, you shoot first and count up the points afterwards.

My guilty conscience seemed to detect a puzzled, reproachful look in the glazed eyes of the two dead beasts. I reflected, with little satisfaction, that they had died not because I had been clever enough to shoot them but because I had not the moral courage not to.

No such thought, however, entered the mind of Dan Donohue and he launched himself with enthusiasm into the usual operation with the jack-knife. Moved perhaps by the same strange primitive instinct that inspires the Abyssinians, he attacked first the stags' genital organs, and with a wild frenzy flung them over his head.

The operation complete, we returned to the valley for congratulations.

I have shot my stag. I shall never shoot another.

FLIERS ANCIENT AND MODERN

WHEN the final reckoning comes to be made of the so-called 'ace' pilots of the war, as to which shall live with the Balls and the Bishops and the Mannocks in the history of air warfare, none will stand higher than Wing Commander Douglas Bader, D.S.O., D.F.C., known, to his great disgust, as the 'legless wonder.'

Ten years ago, when he was twenty-two, Bader was accounted one of the most promising pilots in the Royal Air Force. There was nothing, they 've told me, that he could not or would not do with an aeroplane. He was a fine all-round athlete and had played Rugby football, cricket, and squash for the R.A.F.

One day he performed some aerobatics too close to the ground, his machine crashed, and he woke up to find both his legs amputated, one completely, the other just below the knee. He was fitted with two artificial legs.

Ever since his accident Bader had but one ambition—to fly again. He kept his hand in by flying various types of civil aircraft (and, of course, drove a motor car) and was passed as a fully competent pilot. Then at last the war gave him his chance. He badgered the Air Ministry into accepting him again and was sent to a Wiltshire flying school, where he passed with flying colours. He was posted to a fighter squadron at his own request, partly because he did not want any one else to be involved in an accident in which he was the pilot. And before long he and the squadron of Canadians he was leading destroyed thirty-three German raiders in three engagements.

Forced down in a sweep over the Channel, Bader (who rhymes incidentally with 'harder,' not with 'Ada') is at the time of writing a prisoner of war in Germany. Whatever his future, his name has passed imperishably into the annals of aviation.

A letter I had from him soon after his capture revealed the circumstances in which he was lost. He became engaged with two Messerschmitts, shot one down and collided with the other.

The accident completely knocked the tail off his Spitfire and it plunged to earth.

As it fell, he set about removing himself and his two steel legs from the battered aircraft—and found himself stuck. Nothing doing. There was only one thing for it.

'I had to jettison my right leg,' he wrote, 'in the protracted but energetic performance of evacuation. It wished to stay inside a tailless aeroplane while I wished to leave—so we both had it our own way.'

Eventually he got out, and floated down into the hands of his astonished captors dangling only his left leg. As was widely reported at the time, his friends shortly afterwards flew over and dropped him a spare right leg on a parachute.

But what I and many of his friends wondered for a long time was, 'How can you just throw away a leg like that?' Whenever I watched Bader fly, he was wearing an overall flying-suit, out of which one would have thought it quite impossible to extract a leg as a conjurer draws a length of coloured silk from his trousers pocket.

I wrote and asked him about this, and after some months got his reply. In language rather reminiscent of Holmes explaining the obvious-to-everyone-but-you, my dear Watson, he says:

'Do I sense a certain scepticism in your query as to how I jettisoned my leg? Apart from the fact that, had it been impossible, I should have done it, the operation is not difficult, because I was wearing battle-dress only. A flying-suit certainly would have complicated matters.

"Parachute harness leg-straps are not in any way difficult, while detachment of a leg secured only by a belt round the waist is scarcely a problem. I am sorry I did not give you the details first time, but quite frankly the whole thing did not strike me as being anything extraordinary.'

So that's how it was. And now another problem arises, which I shall put at some time: 'Did he have to "jettison" his battle-dress trousers too?"

Incidentally, and this was never published at the time, Bader states: 'Our opponents on the spot recovered my leg some five days later, after I 'd asked for another, and did their best with it. . . . You 'll laugh when you hear the whole story."

And while we're on the subject, a lot of people wondered how Bader could ever get into a Spitfire in a hurry, much less get out. As a matter of fact, it was rather a remarkable performance.

He used to have his aircraft parked nearest to the dispersal hut, so that he had less far to run when there was a scramble. Apart from this, the only assistance he had was that one of the ground crew would lean forward with his hands resting on the wing. Bader then put one hand on the man's shoulder and the other on the edge of the cockpit, and heaved himself up on to the wing.

The next step was to make a sort of jump, which turned him completely round, facing the tail. Then he would pick up his right leg and literally fling it over into the cockpit. Grasping each side of the cockpit, he could then heave the rest of himself in. A metallic clanking indicated that he had manœuvred his feet satisfactorily on to the controls, and that was that.

His squadron's average time over a number of take-offs running into three figures was, I know, exceptionally low. Far from being at any disadvantage with his fellow-pilots, he always claimed that he had a considerable advantage over them, in that the Germans could riddle a great deal of him with bullets without doing any harm.

When, in a minor accident, he broke both his legs, had them straightened out by the armourer, and took to the air again within the hour, it seemed that his point was well taken.

The last I heard of him was that he had been 'sent to Borstal,' as he put it, for persistently trying to escape. They had sent him, with a number of other 'bad boys,' to a castle on top of a hill, from which it is reputedly impossible to extricate oneself. I believe he had already tried four times. Soon after he was captured, he got away and stayed on the loose for more than twenty-four hours. It would not in the least surprise me to see him turn up in England one day, tin legs and all. When he sets his mind to a thing, there is very little stopping him.

When he took up golf, never having swung a club on his own two legs, he stuck at it till his handicap came down to nine—which is more than you can say for four-fifths of the golfers of this world.

On slippery days he would often fall completely over. Climbing in and out of bunkers was in itself an acrobatic feat. But with all this he would play two rounds in a day, carrying his own clubs. He did not drink or smoke and the top half of his body was just about the fittest thing you could find. In mid-winter it was his habit to play in a little open-necked vest with

short sleeves, while the rest of us were bolstered up with jerkins, scarves, mittens, and what not. After lugging himself and his clubs round for about eight miles, he finished the day perspiring like a man in a Turkish bath.

Once he discovered that he played better shots when his ball was on an uphill lie. So he went along and had half an inch off one of his legs to give him a permanent feeling of playing uphill (Which leg, by the way? People often argue about this. Work it out and I'll tell you in a minute.)

Apart from being physically tough, Bader is mentally the hardest man I know. He has been through the fire, physically and spiritually, to an extent rarely suffered by one individual, and as a result, probably subconsciously, he looks for an almost impossibly hard standard in everyone else.

We used to say before the war that we would sooner have almost anyone in the world chasing us in a fighter aircraft, and what a shame it was that he would never be able to fly one. The fact that he was allowed to do so—due largely, I believe, to Air Vice-Marshal Robb—was a rare triumph of common sense over red tape.

And that leg business? He shortened his left leg, of course. You don't agree? All right!

What irony if Bader met in combat another golfer of my acquaintance who was also disabled, though to a lesser degree, in the air. I met him at the Wannsee club outside Berlin and we had a practice round together before the German championship. A swarthy, jovial fellow, he was then singing in the Berlin opera, and in the evenings, when the wine began to flow, would deliver himself of unprintable songs in a huge, rich baritone. His name was Hammes.

He was erratic that day, in and out of the woods, and though I did not like to mention it, I thought his grip was rather peculiar. Little wonder. It transpired that during the Great War he had been shot through both hands and had brought the machine down with his teeth!

We can't talk of aviators, of course, without mentioning the first Briton to fly in Britain, the holder of Pilot's Certificate No. 1, John Theodore Cuthbert Moore-Brabazon, M.C., M.P., now Lord Brabazon of Tara and known universally as 'Brab.'

He was twenty-four when, for the first time, he left the ground

in a clumsy great box-kite done up with bits of string. That was in France. Then, in the next year, '09, he took the *Daily Mail's* £1,000 prize for the first all-British flight of one mile. He has been preaching the cause of aviation ever since.

Brab, though few people know it, was the forerunner of the present system of aerial photography, by which the R.A.F. take photographs literally by the million. In the early days of the last war, when the observer had to lean over the side to take his pictures, nine pictures in one flight was reckoned quite good work. By attaching the camera to the bottom of the plane and making various adjustments, Brab turned this figure into seventy-two per flight. After the war they gave him £600 for his invention.

Yet nowadays, strangely, the man who has spent a lifetime in preaching the cause of aviation both inside the House of Commons and out, the man who has been Minister of Aircraft Production, President of the Royal Aeronautical Society, the Royal Aero Club, and the Air Mails Committee, and an automatic choice as one of the three members of the Commission which inquired into the loss of the R 101, refuses to leave the ground.

When, on golfing trips to Germany, the rest of us used to fly there in three or four hours, Brab took his twenty-two hours by the land and sea route. Nor will anything budge him from this attitude, he says, till someone discovers a non-inflammable substitute for petrol. 'I do not believe,' he once announced, 'that any form of transport is going to be really popular in which, when you make quite a small mistake, you go straight to the cemetery.'

Brab has dabbled with success in a dozen subjects. He drove in the first meeting at Brooklands, and had a long and distinguished career as a racing driver both here and on the Continent. He is a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron; a director of Kodaks and a first-rate photographer; a past president of the English Golf Union and winner of the Parliamentary Handicap from plus one. On the Cresta at St Moritz he was still winning the Curzon Cup at the age of forty-one. Besides being a director of the Greyhound Racing Association, he has an immense knowledge of the electrical and radio industries.

He might have been undisputed king of almost any of these branches of life. That he never did so was due partly to his versatility, partly to an amiable and characteristically English lack of ambition to become the typical 'high pressure' dictator of big business, and partly to a dry, caustic outlook on life, which

would have prevented his taking either himself or his rôle quite seriously enough to fill the part. Dictators must never see too much of the comic side of life.

Two remarks typical of Brab have gone down to history in their respective spheres. One was made during the course of Mr Baldwin's administration when he caused a sensation by talking of the 'snores of the Front Bench resounding throughout the land.' The other was made in the Royal and Ancient golf club of St Andrews.

The club's administration was being widely criticized. There was much bitter comment on the alleged incompetence of the 'Old Gang' who were said to run it. Too much influence, it was said, was being wielded by the late Provost Norman Boase and Mr Robert Harris. Brab dissolved a stormy general meeting into loud laughter by observing that they must resign themselves to the fact that boase and 'arris were weapons of a bygone age.... I believe he had been waiting four months to deliver himself of this *bon mot*.

Brab is some of the very best company I know, because he retains the mind of a boy. Which sounds a doubtful compliment to pay—but isn't. He still has the unaffected enthusiasm which, forty to fifty years ago, made his model railway the envy of every other small boy. When last I dined with him, he was parliamentary private secretary to Sir Samuel Hoare, who was then a member of the inner Cabinet as minister without portfolio. Brab was carrying in his head some of the most profound secrets of the nation. One can think of many men who in similar circumstances would have shot a tremendously heavy 'line.' We laughed our way through dinner and retired to the drawing-room, whereupon he removed the oil-painting from above the settee and with much pride erected his new dartboard.

HEIL HITLER!

THERE was a period soon after the war broke out in earnest when I thought I might any day be interned. Not that I am not as stout-hearted a patriot as the rest of you. Not at all. But I felt that somewhere, on one of those mysterious dossiers on which respectable persons are so surprised to find their records kept, I

must be labelled as a person potentially in sympathy with the enemy.

Whatever may be the state of the world when these words see the light of day, I shall not be ashamed to admit myself to have been one of that earnest, hoodwinked band of suckers who did what little was in their power to foster good relations between the Germans and ourselves in the years before the war.

Four times in three years I was in Germany, and each time their hospitality and the apparent warmth of their welcome were more cordial than the last. It seems impossible, even now, to believe that so many people could express such unanimous goodwill and yet conceal so effectively that vileness of spirit which typifies the Germany of to-day. If so, the Germans must be the greatest nation of actors in the world and the British the simplest Simons of all time. The one I can believe at a pinch, the other never.

At any rate, there arrived in London from Wiesbaden in 1936 a good-looking, well-spoken young German by the name of Baron Schertel von Burtenbach, whom I can best describe as a 'gentleman-Nazi'—if you agree that there is such an animal. That is, he was a cultured, well-educated fellow with the easy good manners of a gentleman, and he made a first-rate impression on every one he met. It would be fair, judging by the many conversations I had with him on the subject, to say that he was a Nazi not as a blind disciple of the house-painter, but because his intelligence told him that some stern creed of discipline was required if Germany was to pull herself together. The Nazis, especially in the early days before theory had become practice, seemed to offer what was wanted.

Now in Germany, where they like things 'regimented,' the nation's sport, as a whole, is governed and organized by a Sport 'Fuehrer,' one Baron von Tschammer und Osten. Each sport—tennis, football, golf, athletics, and the rest—then has its own separate 'Fuehrer'—all of which seems to us a pretty ludicrous way of going on, but then, as long as they didn't interfere with us, it was no business of ours.

The golf Fuehrer was, and I dare say still is, Karl Henkell, also of Wiesbaden, champagne magnate, uncle-in-law of Von Ribbentrop and one of the richest men in Germany. Von Burtenbach had come over at Henkell's bidding, as I gathered, to get advice on the subject of encouraging the spread of golf, especially on a 'popular' basis, throughout Germany. I met

him one day in the Devonshire Club with Major Lavarack, the secretary of the English Golf Union. We got along very well together, and in an hour or so I had arranged to go across for the German championships that summer and give any advice they might think helpful.

I flew first to Zurich, where I had been invited to write about their new golf course, and was duly impressed at being planted in the heart of Switzerland less than three hours after leaving Croydon. From there I flew rather apprehensively to Berlin. I say apprehensively because I did not speak a word of the language, and even at that time sinister stories were being printed in the British newspapers describing the fate of travellers who innocently committed a breach of the stringent German regulations. Every one was in uniform in Germany, so the current theory held, and at any time one might be yanked off to the police station for no reason at all.

First impressions tended to confirm these tales, for when we landed at Stuttgart for the customs I timidly 'declared' the humble flat packet of fifty English cigarettes in my overcoat pocket. A man in a vivid green military uniform with jack-boots threw up his hands in horror and fetched another gentleman with a rather more pretentious uniform. They jabbered away together and the second man retired to fetch a third, this one attired almost *à la* Goering. After further expressions of astonishment and much curious handling of my humble Du Mauriers, it was interpreted to me by a bystander that the duty would be seventeen shillings.

I clicked my heels in a fashion that I hoped would impress them, bowed, and waved the cigarettes away. They bowed in return and retired with their prize to the inner sanctum, where I have no doubt that half a dozen Du Mauriers were alight before our plane had left the ground. Thus far we were not amused.

With the ordinary internal air services of Germany at that time, however, no one but a fool could fail to be impressed. Their standard three-engined planes, now troop-carriers, were not so comfortable as the Douglases of Swissair or the dear old lumbering 'Hannibals,' so very, very British, of Imperial Airways; but all over Germany, day and night, they were running with the precision of the London underground railway. Each plane, I noticed, had three pilots—one veteran, one fairly young, and one obvious 'learner' often a mere boy. One's sense of security was not increased by the fact that when they went

forward to the cockpit they habitually shut the door and one couldn't tell whether one was being heaved aloft by the veteran or the boy. At Frankfurt, that wonderful air-field which the Germans hacked out of the heart of a great forest, I think it must have been the boy, for no sooner had he got the machine off the ground than he tipped it over into a steep bank and the wing beside which I was sitting shot down to within, I swear, six feet of the ground.

At Berlin they welcomed me with what I still like to think was sincere hospitality and I settled down to readjust my ideas of life in Germany. No, everybody did not wear uniforms. No, they did not, so far as I could see, spend their whole time waving their arms aloft and shouting 'Heil Hitler.' Those who did go through the ritual did it in the manner of a man brushing a fly from his face. I think that most people at that time still saw the ludicrous side of it, though, of course, it wasn't the least use asking them.

I saw an Olympic Games meeting, though Uncle Adolf was not there in person—which is a pity, for it is no small thing to be able to tell one's grandchildren that one has seen the best-hated man in the whole history of humankind. Let me add, to continue this purely objective report, that the organization of the Olympic Games, and in particular the transporting of vast crowds to and from the stadium, was truly and typically magnificent. It was impossible for the most chicken-headed sightseer without a word of German to lose his way. The guides, interpreters, and ushers were dressed in handsome white uniforms. I was sitting in my seat in the stadium, had taken out a cigarette, and was reaching for a match, when a lighted match appeared over my right shoulder. It was the fellow who had shown me in. A small thing, maybe, but damned good propaganda—as witness the fact that I have remembered the incident for five years.

The golf championship was played at Wannsee, a lovely country club outside Berlin, somewhat on American lines, and we had a most enjoyable week there, made the more memorable for myself by the fact that I won the championship.

One afternoon I was idly watching the players from the club-house terrace when I saw a tall, lean, greyish man whose face seemed vaguely familiar. He was dressed in shorts and had an execrable golf swing. He was Little Willie.

Later, sitting on a bench in the locker room, Little Willie and

I had a long talk together. He was a terrible golfer and, as I was brought up to believe, no great shakes as a general, but at the age of—what?—fifty-five or sixty he struck me as a particularly gentle and courteous man. (A little more of this and they really will lock me up!) With one or two more leading questions I could have worked that locker-room chat into a sensational interview, complete with international repercussions and what not. Somehow I 've always been glad I didn't.

Next year I went back to defend the title at Bad Ems. The atmosphere down in this part of the world was still gay and happy. A party consisting of General Critchley, Frank Gentle, Colonel Moore-Brabazon, and myself flew to Cologne and then drove down beside the Rhine, to the astonishment of the onlookers, in the general's trailing caravan: no fewer than forty-four British players came out in search of the title, inspired by the thought that if I could win it, then any one had a chance. To talk of war between the two countries in an atmosphere like this was frankly ludicrous.

If I tell the tale of how I was dethroned, I do so only because it usually makes people laugh. My employers at that time, the *Evening Standard*, had ordered a special report of my progress from Reuter's—and all went well until, in the round before the semi-finals, I encountered a young fellow called Leonard von Beckerath, probably the best golfer ever turned out by Germany.

Something went wrong that afternoon and, with seven holes left to play, I was three down. The next four I accomplished in 3, 3, 5, 3—and got nothing back. Three down with three to play, and the title pretty well written off. The par of the last three holes at Bad Ems is 4, 3, 4—and I swear by the Royal and Ancient that I did them in 3, 2, 3 and squared the match. I should think the putt on the last green was every inch of ten yards.

Von Beckerath beat me on the twentieth, but the sensational finish was the topic of the day—3, 3, 5, 3, 3, 2, 3 . . . why, not even Bobby Jones . . . ! At least, thought I, I can look forward to a pretty good 'write-up' when I get home.

Returning to the office, I looked up the file. 'Longhurst,' Reuter's representative had recorded, 'was three up on Von Beckerath with seven to play, but *cracked*. . . .'

A year passed and once more we were in Germany, this time in Frankfurt. And now there was a sinister change in the atmosphere. It was the August before Munich. We took the car to Ostend, drove through the battlefields and saw the hideous,

squalid commercialization of Hill 60 by the rival sellers of bogus curios of the Great War, and so came, in darkness, to the frontier twenty miles the other side of Malmedy. For half an hour we had seen no sign of a living soul and the atmosphere grew menacing in a way that is difficult to put into words. A red light waved furiously in front of us and we pulled up for inspection by an armed Belgian policeman. He thought the frontier would be closed, but we could try. We drove on for another ten silent, lonely miles and began to suspect that we had shot through the frontier post without stopping and that even now the whole police force of Germany might be hunting us down. More waving of red lights, and ugly thoughts of incarceration for the night, if not longer. Two more policemen with rifles. No, the frontier was a mile or two farther on, but it was closed and we must go back, right back to Malmedy. Why this comparatively commonplace episode should have seemed so sinister at the time I cannot say. I can only say that it was.

We drove back to Malmedy and put up at a small hotel in the Square. It was about eleven o'clock at night, and they gave us a dinner of soup, omelette, trout, and chicken, to say nothing of rooms with private bathrooms, and the bill was about twelve shillings each for everything. No wonder people used to go abroad for their holidays.

The hospitality extended by the Germans to the English people who went out to play in the golf championship that year was quite astonishing. The burgomaster gave us a banquet in the town hall; they took us to see the Graf Zeppelin; they took us on pleasure trips up the River Main; they gave us tickets to see an open-air performance of *Hamlet*. This last, which took place at night, was one of the most impressively staged spectacles I have ever seen and moved very deeply those of us who went to see it. It was played in the main square of the ancient part of the city and the floodlit background of old dark-red buildings could have come straight out of Hans Andersen. The acting was magnificent. I understood not one single word—and enjoyed it as much as any play I have seen in a London theatre. With typical thoroughness they had placed guards at every road leading to the square and would not let a motor car come within half a mile during the performance.

Then again we were feasted by Henkell at Wiesbaden and taken over his cellars—another extraordinary spectacle. They are forty yards underground, and to get into them you walk down

a wide staircase as long and steep as a tube escalator. There you find three million bottles of champagne, row upon row upon row. They all stay there for three years, and during that period about one per cent burst; in other words, about ten per day. It is eerie to stand down there in the silence and think that the bottle you are looking at may be on the point of bursting. Suddenly the silence is broken, far away down one of the aisles, with a muffled boom and the silvery tinkle of glass—another bottle that 'could not take it.'

Then one day I was introduced to a charming (sorry!), cultured, elderly man called Dr Burchard-Motz, who had once, as I gathered, been lord mayor of Hamburg. He was connected with the Deutsche-Englische Gesellschaft, the British counterpart to which was the Anglo-German Friendship League. He asked me if I would go over in the winter at their expense to lecture in Bremen and Hamburg. 'Like a shot!' said I, and so it was arranged.

This turned out to be a thoroughly interesting experience to which I have found my mind continually harking back since the beginning of the war. Once again, of course, they looked after me almost as though I were a visiting monarch, but here that easy-going relationship born of a common interest in golf was noticeably absent. Munich had passed and one could no longer dismiss the possibility of war between the two countries as 'unthinkable.' War, it had to be admitted, was on the cards.

Three or four times daily, and often long into the night, I found myself talking of war with all classes of the community. They expressed a unanimous horror of the prospect of fighting with England. To what extent were these people sincere? Did they know then that Germany was amassing the vast armaments that she was to use in less than a year's time? And if they knew, did they really hope that these armaments might never be used against England?

The answers to those questions can only be a matter of opinion. And it remains my opinion that nearly all the folk I talked to were completely sincere in their desire not to go to war with England, even if they did not dread the prospect quite so heartily as we did.

If they were not sincere, why did they trouble to invite an Englishman to go over and lecture to them about 'English sport and the English people'? They knew I was a journalist, agreed, and that presumably, if they looked after me nicely, I should

probably write of my visit in a kindly strain. Agreed, too, that the Deutsche-Englische Gesellschaft was largely, though not openly, an agency for the dissemination of German propaganda. But what possible good could it do them to spend their money in getting me over there to talk on the innocuous subject they chose for me? Was it all part of a gigantic plan to lull England to sleep with specious talk of the 'unthinkability' of war, while they got on with the business of making arms and aeroplanes with which suddenly to crush her? If so, I am duly flattered. But I can hardly believe it.

Yet there were in that organization some strange characters, of which the most suspicious was S. M. Leisewitz, one of the best-looking men I ever met. This gentleman held quite a big job in the Hamburg-Amerika shipping line, and was subpœna'd to give evidence in the big New York spy trial a year or two ago, to show how it came about that certain persons travelled habitually to and from New York without paying any fare to the company. He did not know that I knew this, and, of course, I took no pains to tell him.

Then there was an air of regimentation about the Gesellschaft which seemed strange in a body whose avowed object was only the founding of a better understanding between two countries. There was a bullet-headed young devil by the name of Finkentey ('Not Finkenstein, please!' he used to say), who was head of some thirty thousand Hitler Youth at Bremen. I met him again in London two or three months later and was convinced he was up to no good. He was a typical product of the Germany we know to-day, an earnest, ruthless, humourless worshipper of discipline and regimentation.

The Germans in the years immediately before the war were difficult to understand, for the simple reason that it was almost impossible to get their true opinions out of them. Stories of their being afraid to talk were no exaggeration. Sometimes one was embarrassed at asking them questions for fear they might not dare to answer. The latest ailment in Germany, one bolder spirit whispered to me, was known as the 'Berlin stiff neck'; you got it from constantly turning your head to see if any one was listening!

At Hamburg I lunched at the house of a delightful young fellow called Max Reincke, who would be a gentleman in any language. Among the company was, perforce, an intellectual pip-squeak but physical bruiser in the person of the local 'Sport-

fuehrer': a cropped, square-jawed jack-in-office with a tiresome habit of clicking his heels. By normal standards he would never have entered the house except possibly as chauffeur. As it was, he was a person of much local consequence and had to be treated as such. He sat sternly silent as the talk flowed easily on either side. He knew he did not 'belong,' Reincke knew he didn't, and I knew he didn't. It was all rather awkward.

Had I ever met Karl Henkell? they asked. 'Good Lord, yes!' said I. 'I meet him every year.' And I told them, fortified by hock and the general air of *bonhomie*, of the ordeal of being presented with the championship cup by Henkell. This consists in standing for several minutes in front of a crowd while one's hand is pump-handled up and down by the worthy Henkell as he delivers a long speech in German. Now, if you don't understand a word of the language, this tends to become extremely embarrassing. You can't very well snatch your hand away. On the other hand, to have it shaken up and down for five minutes without understanding a word of what's going on is enough to make the hardiest man feel self-conscious. The only indication I had that I was still the subject of his oration was the occasional recognition of the words 'Herr Longgurrst.' I gave what I fancied to be a very passable imitation of the scene, with a flow of guttural mock-German interspersed with 'Herr Longgurrsts.' I am happy to say that the company found it very much to their liking—it is not often in Germany that you get a really good laugh at the expense of a man like Henkell—and in the end tears of laughter were rolling down their cheeks.

. . . except, that is, those of the 'Sportfuehrer,' who sat glum and stern. I felt that this incitement to mutiny might go hard with the rest of them, and that a black mark would go down against their names in the party register that evening. It was only a trifling incident. I record it as being emblematic of Germany just before the war.

This was by no means the only laughter we enjoyed. With some of the brighter spirits among my hosts I spent several evenings in the vast beer gardens at Hamburg. No table seats less than a dozen people, so that when the singing and the linking of arms and the swaying in time with the music begins, every man must join in on sociable terms with his neighbour. Inevitably the neighbours at our table would show the liveliest interest in my being English. Was it really possible that people in England thought that the Germans wanted war? Surely

Munich had put an end to all that? More beer would be called for, and once the whole table insisted on signing a post card of good wishes to my wife in England.

Do I write this to try to prove to you, at this of all times, that all Germans are jolly good fellows? Certainly not. It is my impression that seventy-five per cent of them are 'neutral'—that is, potentially good and potentially bad. Ten per cent I rate to be as fine a type as you will find anywhere in the world, men like Max Reincke and Dr Burchard-Motz. The remaining fifteen per cent are just about the biggest damned villains that ever breathed God's air. And the trouble is that this militant fifteen per cent carry with them the 'neutral' seventy-five per cent—making ninety per cent downright bad. At least, that 's how I see it, and I think it 's as good an explanation of their conduct as any.

Anyway, damn the whole bloody lot of them!

MODERN MAESTRO

It was Mr Humphrey Grose Hodge, now head master of Bedford School, who first propounded in my hearing the theory that a man of reasonable intelligence can achieve any single ambition, if he is prepared to subject every other interest in life to its realization. In other words, if you decide that the guiding purpose of your life is to become a millionaire at forty, you have only to sacrifice every one of those diversions that make life worth while and a millionaire at forty you 'll be. Stop by the wayside to admire the view or exchange a passing word with your fellow travellers, and you fall behind. As to whether such diversions are a Good Thing or a Bad Thing, as the historians put it, is not the point.

A dozen years ago or more, a rather round-shouldered youth, decidedly pale of complexion, made up his mind what he wanted from life. He wanted to be the greatest golf player in Britain, maybe even in the world. He wanted for himself the friendships, the social eminence, the money, and the sense of personal achievement, that such a position would bring to him. He determined that, come what might, no person and no circumstance should deflect him from the path.

The name was Thomas Henry Cotton.

It took him approximately eight years to achieve the first stage of his ambition, to be accepted beyond dispute as Britain's leading golfer; and about the same length of time to gather unto himself all the good things that in those days went with it. Whether he would have succeeded in reaching the end of the road and been acknowledged as the world's foremost exponent of his art will never be decided. Adolf and the Ice Cream Merchant stepped in at the critical moment.

To scale the heights in the profession that Cotton chose for himself a man requires two assets—a tough physique and an icy control of his emotions. Cotton had neither. The Cotton of to-day is the perfect example of the self-made man. He 'made' his mind and he 'made' his body, and an intriguing spectacle it was to watch him doing it.

He straightened his back and built up his body limb by limb, until to-day he 's as fine a physical specimen as you 'll find in sport. He has never smoked—unlike many of the master golfers, who have been chain smokers on the links. His consumption of alcohol is limited to an occasional glass of red wine with his meals—again in sharp contrast to some of the champions of the past.

He developed a lissom, sinewy sort of strength in direct contrast to the massive muscularity of the professional wrestler. The impact of hitting a golf ball three hundred yards puts a tremendous strain on the fingers of your left hand as it stands up to the blow put in by your right. I have seen Cotton hit a ball a hundred and sixty yards with his left hand alone, swishing a big iron club as though it were a comedian's cane.

There is a strong streak of obstinacy in this man's nature. He 'd have saved himself many bitter moments in after life if he had recited Æsop's fable of the Reed and the Oak-tree ten times a day when he was a boy. In a sense, though, it was this obstinacy that put him in the way of his present fortune.

It happened when he went to play cricket for Alleyn's School, Dulwich, against the Modern School at Bedford. It was the custom at Alleyn's that the junior boys should carry the cricket bags of the prefects—and a poor custom at that, thought Master Cotton, refusing to comply. The result was a series of wrangles which culminated in his being temporarily forbidden to play cricket. So he turned to golf instead.

It is a fact that many of the great golfers—and you can detect

the tendency in other sports too—had to survive dark periods of unpopularity before emerging into the sunshine of public hero-worship. Even Bobby Jones, who turned into the best-loved golfer in the game's history.

'Awful feller!' they said. 'Tore up his card at St Andrews. Lost his temper.'

And Walter Hagen, too. 'Awful feller, that Hagen!' they used to say. 'Kept Abe Mitchell waiting on the tee and put him off.'

James Bruen, the young Irishman, who may yet become the world's greatest golfer, naturally came in for his turn. 'Awful feller. Swollen head. Must have, at that age.'

Cotton drew controversy around him as surely as a magnet draws a pin. He always seemed to be in trouble with someone or other. His statements were often misreported, and more frequently misinterpreted. So were his motives. Because of his forthright nature and the clear vision he had of exactly where he wanted to get to in this life, he lacked tact. I came to the conclusion that in most of the controversies that centred around him he had right on his side, but presented his case in the wrong way.

Here is a good example. On the Saturday before the championship there used to be held a ridiculous match between the professionals of England and Scotland, played by foursomes and singles. The championship, the ultimate goal of all professionals —English, Scottish, Americans, and the rest—is a stroke play event, which demands a different technique from the man-to-man element in match play. The Scottish professionals were no match for the English, there being little money in the game in Scotland, and so little did the participants care for the match that some of them did not even trouble to find out the result at the end. As for the public, they cared less. They preferred to watch the Americans—or Cotton—playing practice rounds.

Saturday was the last day of practice for the championship, for which the more serious-minded professionals like Cotton had been working themselves up throughout the season. He was asked to play for England. He refused. There was no question of national prestige at stake—indeed, after a few years this footling match was abandoned—and I am sure he was right to refuse. Incidentally, other players later took to refusing, but their action passed without comment.

But he needn't have refused in a couple of lines on a post card!

Then, again, they asked him to go to the United States with

the Ryder Cup team. Here was quite a different question, for, ludicrous though it may seem, no little national prestige attaches to these sporting contests. Equally ludicrous was the insistence by the Professional Golfers' Association that the team should all travel home together. It couldn't have mattered to them what their men did when the match was over. Indeed, the more they saw of the country, the richer their experience of the game would be later on. To Cotton it meant a thousand pounds or so extra in fees for exhibition matches.

He asked if he could come home at his leisure. They said: 'Certainly not.' So he declined to go. Britain took the field without their best player and were routed. Cotton to my mind was thoroughly ill advised in his attitude. And it took the public at least a couple of years to forget.

His battle with his 'temperament' was an interesting study to the man on the touch line, who doesn't have to endure the mental agonies of the player wrestling with the turbulent emotions that surge within him. And golf is in this sense the most tantalizing of pastimes. Alone among outdoor games it offers no physical opportunity of 'blowing off steam.'

Cotton, unlike Hagen, sought complete perfection. Where Hagen, admitting the fallibility of the human make-up, expected four or five execrable shots per round—and made them—Cotton regarded every imperfect stroke as a personal failure. A short putt missed meant, for him, the tortures of the damned. He used to strike himself on the head, quite hard, with his own putter!

His fellow professionals at one time disliked him intensely. Let me say with all possible emphasis that this was more their fault than his. He simply approached the game from a different angle. He was in the game for money, just as the doctor, the lawyer, the stockbroker, and the civil servant are in the game for money.

He found that his mind and his body were better rested between the rounds of a tournament if he retired to his hotel for lunch. He shunned the prospect of the crowded clubhouse bar—the inevitable inquests on the play and the succession of little men whose day was made if they could be seen talking to him. So he was dubbed 'superior' and 'unsociable.'

He wore—once he 'd given up the green pork-pie hat—Savile Row clothes and silk monogrammed shirts. He drove a large motor-car—which he had a tendency to park opposite signs

saying 'No Parking.' And, which displeased his rivals more than anything, he made a tremendous amount of money. His business acumen is quite exceptional, and I 've little doubt that he will still be piling up fortunes long after his golfing skill has faded.

I am not suggesting that Cotton, purely as a producer of golf strokes, was without a rival. But in the art of 'cashing in' on his golf and personality he was lengths ahead of the field. When his fellow professionals were happy enough to perform in exhibition matches for fifteen guineas, Cotton announced that his fee was seventy. Clubs protested feebly, but paid. They knew that people would flock from all sides to see this fellow—and it is a fact that no such match in which he took part lost money.

He drew fourteen pounds a week, an unparalleled fee, as a retainer from his club, later reducing it, by agreement, on the equally unparalleled consideration that he should spend as many days as he liked away from the club. A firm of ball manufacturers paid him two thousand a year to play with their ball and act as consultant. Newspapers paid him another fifteen hundred.

He fitted out his shop like a Bond Street store and sold sweaters at seven guineas. When at last he designed his own set of clubs, he sold them for thirty-seven and sixpence apiece against the usual twenty-five bob. He kept four assistants.

They asked him to go to America to play Ralph Guldahl for what they proposed to style the championship of the world. Guldahl, by the way, was the fellow who created a minor storm by declaring on his return from an unsuccessful visit to this country that, if he never saw England again, that would still be too soon. The feeling was mutual.

Cotton replied that if they 'd guarantee him two thousand pounds he 'd do it. Otherwise he wouldn't be troubled. So the trip fell through.

Then he went on the music halls. 'He 'll flop,' said the critics. 'You 'll never draw the people to watch a mere demonstration of golf.' It was the critics who flopped. At three hundred pounds a week Cotton packed the Colosseum. They retained him for another week, increasing his salary. When I saw the show, I reckoned that fifteen per cent of the audience might have seen a golf club before. For the whole eighteen minutes of his act you could have heard a pin drop.

There is something faintly vulgar about chronicling the sources of other men's incomes, but Cotton's was the subject of so much speculation and 'revelation' in the public sheets as to lose all

privacy long ago. In any case—alas, for his sake—it is mostly a thing of the past.

I mentioned that he made a handsome income, almost as a sideline, from journalism. This was much resented by the smaller fry of the newspaper profession, who seemed to look upon it as taking the bread out of honest men's mouths. It was, of course, nothing of the sort. The fact is that Cotton is a first-rate writer on golf. He writes in a simple, straightforward style, with the confidence of a man who knows what he 's talking about, and the modesty becoming to one who has often to chronicle his own successes. And—yes—he *does* write his own stuff.

Journalists, as a matter of fact, have no cause to be anything but grateful to Cotton. In the dull winter months ten minutes on the telephone with him, at the expense of the office, was certain to produce two or three pungent topics for discussion.

I suppose the secret was—and it was certainly part of the secret of his main success—that he was *keen* on golf, keener than any man in Great Britain. Strangely, that does not apply to most British professionals, though it does to the Americans. The British seem to take their game casually. If they play well, they 're on their game that day. If they don't, they 're not. That 's all.

Golfers can be great bores—though not, I think, such bores as rowing men, Rugby footballers, and connoisseurs of wines—and after some years of close association with the game I avoided golfing discussions and debates as a man shuns the plague. I developed a remarkable instinct in the detection of bores at first sight. One sentence, sometimes the look in a man's eye, or even the way he leant against the bar, was enough to warn me to fade silently away. But with Cotton I could stay up all night talking golf. I 'd say the same of that bronzed, amiable little Latin American, Gene Sarazen—and of precious few other people.

I suppose it was partly because Cotton has such an all-embracing knowledge of the game—and, after all, we 'd rather listen to the Prime Minister than the politician of the four-ale bar—and partly because, being a fairly sensitive and highly strung sort of fellow, he went through all the emotions in their acutest form, while winning championships, that the ordinary handicap golfer endures when suddenly confronted with the prospect of winning the monthly medal at his home club. So, it might be said, do other professionals who win championships. Certainly. But few of them have Cotton's knack, in conversation, of analysing

these reactions and reducing them so well to the common level. The man who came nearest to matching him was Wimbledon Park's burly, good-humoured professional, W. J. Cox.

Of Cotton's style I will not say a great deal. This is not, as I promised, a book on the art of the golf swing. Apart from the tremendous, pliable strength in his hands, wrists, and arms, I think the characteristic most noticeable to a person seeing him in action for the first time might be his sense of balance—a remark that is equally true of great golfing artists like Harry Vardon, Bobby Jones, and Joyce Wethered, though not, strangely, of Walter Hagen.

Nothing impresses the average spectator-golfer more profoundly than an exhibition of trick shots, the undisputed king of which realm is Joe Kirkwood, the Australian. Joe can hit hooks and slices at will; he can take a full swing and send the ball trickling two or three yards; he can hit balls off watches without breaking the glass; he can do almost everything with a golf ball except make it talk. (Though, by the way, if you 're ever watching one of these displays and the man turns round and says: 'What 'd you like me to do now?' just answer: 'Hit one dead straight. That 's pretty well the only thing they can't do!)

Cotton doesn't go in for these sidelines—in public. But I shall never forget a display he gave spontaneously at Bad Ems, one day when we were out there for the German championship. He hit them round in semicircles, he ballooned them into the air, he hit them along the ground. Then someone put up a shooting-stick, twenty-seven yards away. Using only an iron club Cotton hit it square on the stem with such force that the stick somersaulted out of the ground. His widest miss was by about two feet.

He conducted a kind of fielding practice, at a range of about ninety yards, with General Critchley catching the balls. On the whole I should say that this high pitch is Cotton's most impressively accurate shot. At any rate I remember that Critch had scarcely to move more than a pace or two to catch them. Critch was doing very nicely when Cotton muttered: 'He won't hold this one!' I noticed that little extra flip with the right hand that sent the ball springing from the clubhead. Like the rest it fell perfectly to hand, but it leaped from Critch's grasp like a jumping cracker and left the gallant general wringing his hands like a cat that has put its paws on a hot brick.

People often ask me, with the implied sneer reserved for con-

versation about successful men whose acquaintance they cannot claim, how far Cotton would have got without the assistance of that fountain of South American commonsense, his wife. Would he, for instance, have achieved that first essential of golfing greatness, the title of open champion? In my opinion, certainly. Prime Ministers pay tribute to the debt they owe to their wives. That doesn't mean that, as bachelors, they 'd have stuck on the back bench.

On the other hand, I estimate that much of Cotton's social and material success has been due to the influence of his wife. She is a woman of shrewd intelligence and few illusions. She is no mean golfer either, though she has not the strength or the height to match herself with the modern young Amazons. Still, she can claim the remarkable title of perpetual champion of Austria, since she held the championship of that country when it was annexed by our present opposition. Unfortunately, they wouldn't let her take the cup out of the country. They 'd had to replace it three times already, they said.

In the same way Cotton himself is perpetual champion of Czechoslovakia. For that matter, he is open champion of Germany, too. Is that to be *in perpetuum* as well? Who knows?

Both I and my fellow writers used to receive constant complaints that we wrote too much about Cotton—to which I could only reply feebly that if only some of the other professionals would do, or say, or write, something worth printing, no one would be happier than I. 'Cotton's Chronicler,' one abusively anonymous writer dubbed me.

Now the war, instead of reducing all golf professionals to the same level of obscurity, has thrown this man into greater prominence than before. His matches and the amounts collected from them have been a boon to sports editors, eager to justify the maintaining of their pages in the paper. 'Cotton turns farmer,' we read, as the maestro, in common with ten million other unsung gardeners, digs for victory. No Sunday paper is complete without its picture of Cotton and his pigs or Cotton and his chickens, or, later, Cotton the Pilot-Officer. Extraordinary.

From all over the country the people have flocked to watch him. His fellow professionals have co-operated in fine spirit, but it is still Cotton that the crowds have come to see. He stands on the eighteenth green and appeals for their money, and they litter the turf with silver and gold. They pay a hundred pounds for the ball he used and a hundred and fifty for his spare set of clubs. His personality alone, like it or not, has turned what began as a minor gesture towards the war effort into the equivalent of extracting, for the Red Cross, nearly sixpence a head from every man and woman who ever swung a golf club in the British Isles.

'YOUNG ENGLAND'

THERE 'LL always be an England—but there 'll never be another *Young England.*

Young England was a super-patriotic, super-melodramatic play written by an eighty-three-year-old author, Walter Reynolds, that kept the West End of London rocking with laughter for more than a year in the late 1930's. I was first introduced to it in its earliest days by Ian Peebles, who is that hardly conceivable combination—first-class wit and Test cricketer. Returning from a luncheon one day I told Peebles that I had been seated next to a very, very well-known journalist of the old black hat and black finger-nails school, whose unwashedness is notorious.

'Was he very dirty?' Peebles inquired.

I replied that as a matter of fact he looked comparatively clean that day.

'Ha!' said Peebles. 'Caught in a shower, no doubt!'

Then we were sitting, one 11th November, in an hotel in Oxford. I was wearing quite a large poppy. Peebles was sporting a tiny one that drew gibes from the company. I made the time-honoured comment that we should probably find it to be last year's. Peebles immediately turned up my large poppy and observed: 'Just as I thought. *Press!*'

It was natural that this type of mind should fasten on to *Young England.* The socialite crowd who attended the first night didn't know what to make of it. They hardly liked to laugh, since it had not been announced as a comedy. On the other hand, it was so *gauche* and so naïvely written that even the nitwitted first-night *habitués* could hardly take it seriously. If ever a play was booked for a flop, that play was *Young England.*

On its second night a single remark changed its fortunes, at the same time beginning an episode that will never be forgotten in stage history. What that remark was I cannot tell you. I

only know that it came from a member of the audience and set the whole house roaring with laughter.

This one 'crack' set the fashion. Night after night the lads of the village repaired to the Victoria Palace to interrupt the play, and the theatre became known to them as 'the Club.' Though in the end *Young England* became the outstanding exhibition of bad manners in London since the Great War, the interruptions that 'made' it in its early stages were extremely witty. If one thought of an interpolation too late one night, one returned on the following evening for the sole purpose of trying it on. If it brought the house down and held up the action of the play, it made the whole evening worth while. If it fell flat, one felt correspondingly guilty. Later, when *Young England* had become the fashion, large bodies of insensitive louts would turn up each evening from the suburbs for no better purpose than to shout 'Oi, Oi, Oi!' or something equally fatuous, little realizing that the dialogue of the play alone was the funniest thing in London.

The beauty of it was that the author had written it as a serious 'message.' Night after night the old gentleman would turn up in the hope that this time the audience would take it in all earnestness. 'Order! Order!' he cried one night from his box. 'Large whisky and soda' was the immediate reply from the back.

The story was an incredibly banal mixture involving the wicked mayor, Jabez Hawke (incomparably played, and never burlesqued, by John Oxford); his good-for-nothing son, Jabez junior, beautifully done by Guy Middleton; the young scoutmaster hero, Hope Ravenscroft; the duchess; her useless son ('my mother the duchess'); his 'lady sister'; all sorts of odd characters whose exact significance one forgets; and a whole host of boy scouts and girl guides.

I suppose I saw this two hours of nonsense thirty or forty times —though I never actually saw the curtain go up. One used to go in by the pit entrance twenty minutes after it started and for some reason or other one was never challenged before walking straight through to the stalls.

Perhaps the best-known 'crack' was when Guy Middleton, having crept along and pinched £200 from the scouts' hut, had to return, as an afterthought, and wipe his finger-prints off the handle.

'Don't forget the handle!' five hundred voices would roar, before he had time to leave the hut.

Not the least amusing aspect of the play was the demeanour of those who had come unwittingly to see it seriously. The first interruptions would aggravate them; the rest of the barrage would send them into a stupor of frustration and fury.

'Don't you *want* to hear the play?' said a woman in my hearing one evening.

'Good God, no, madam! Do you?' replied the young man who had been interrupting beside her.

Towards the end riots were frequent. I took a young woman to see this strange theatrical phenomenon one evening and she heard not one word—by which I don't mean 'not very much'; I mean, literally, not one word. They had seven constables and an inspector in the house that night. Such was the disorder that I slipped out and phoned the *Daily Express*. They printed it on page one, headed 'Pandemonium in a London Theatre'—and sent me a guinea!

One of the brightest 'cracks' in *Young England's* history was made by my old friend and confederate, Leonard Gullick, ex-classical scholar of Cambridge, scratch golfer, and writer of a hundred articles in *Punch*, who left a four-figure job in advertising (for which who can blame him?) to found the Nineteenth Club in London.

Young England had just finished a run at the Piccadilly Theatre and the indefatigable John Oxford came forward in his mayoral robes to make a speech. He thanked the company for continuing to support the play:

'I 'm afraid, ladies and gentlemen, that I 'm a little hoarse . . .,' he began.

'*But how can a mayor be a little hoarse?*' said Gullick.

It held up the proceedings for nearly ten minutes.

(Incidentally, a remarkable sight was witnessed in the West End of London at half-past ten the other morning when a day-raider sent five storeys crashing to the ground. Into the sunshine of Dover Street there emerged, through a small gap in the vast heap of rubble, the unscathed figure of Gullick, attired in a flowered silk dressing-gown!)

Sometimes the show itself was held up while the cast watched the rumpus going on in the stalls below. On a particularly bad Saturday night at Daly's I was sitting beside a big Rugby-footballing New Zealand medical student. He was rather drunk, but in all the babel he uttered no sound until during one of the allegedly comic interludes a boy scout had to trip over the stage

and be carried off on a stretcher hastily constructed by the girl guides.

My neighbour then got up very quietly, advanced down the aisle, and announced: ''S all right. I 'm a doctor. I 'll see to him.' They got him back to his seat quietly enough, but I noticed police gathering behind the stalls and attendants pointing ominously to him. Then they made a concerted grab at him and, after a struggle in which a whole row of seats came adrift, got him away.

Ten minutes later there was a terrific roar as he was seen to be returning amiably to his original seat, minus collar and tie. He waved his clenched hands over his head like a victorious boxer and sat down.

Reinforcements were massed and the second battle was more violent than the first. This time, it seemed, nothing could keep him from a night, unjustly enough, in the cells. When, after another ten minutes, he returned once more, the roar must have been heard across Leicester Square. Every one stood on their seats and cheered—including the cast.

Young England finished with the assembled company standing in tiers in front of a large Union Jack backcloth and a rather tawdry figure of Britannia, and singing *Land of Hope and Glory*. The audience, inevitably, drowned their efforts with *Rule, Britannia!*'

It was good while it lasted? Why, yes. But then life will always be good.

END