

THE ART OF PUTTING

BY

WILLIE PARK

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The Art of Putting



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By

Willie Park

Open Champion, 1887 and 1889

Edinburgh

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1920

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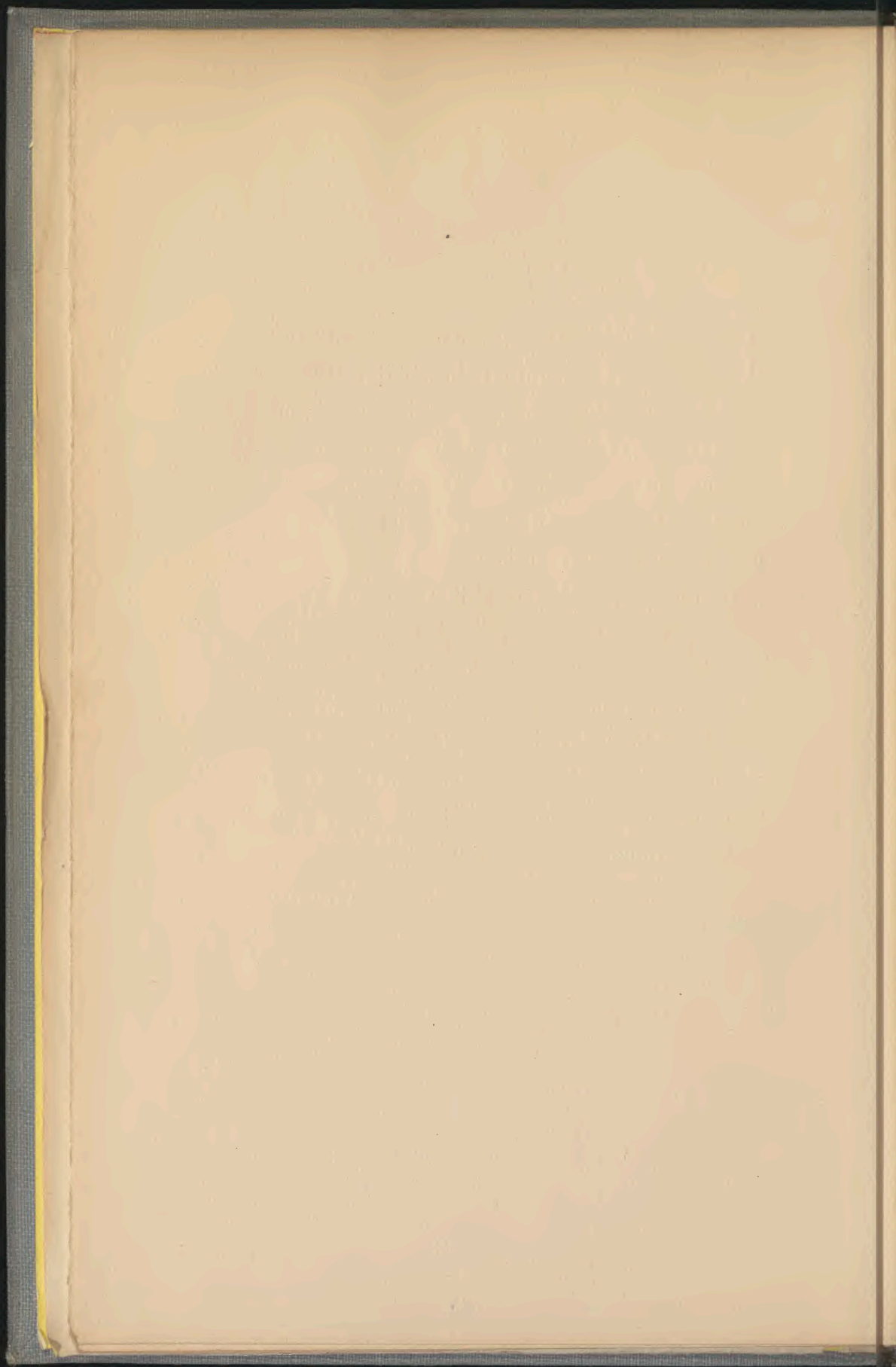
Preface

PUTTING is the key to success in golf. I always recognised this, and I believe I have devoted more time to the study and the practice of putting than any other golfer, amateur or professional. In my prolonged practice I discovered several points which I kept a close secret until now.

In the preparation of this volume I have devoted great care, and in it I give all the knowledge that won for me the position of the best and most consistent putter in the world. I have set down my methods in clear, simple and concise language, and it only remains for the reader to closely study and patiently practice what I advise.

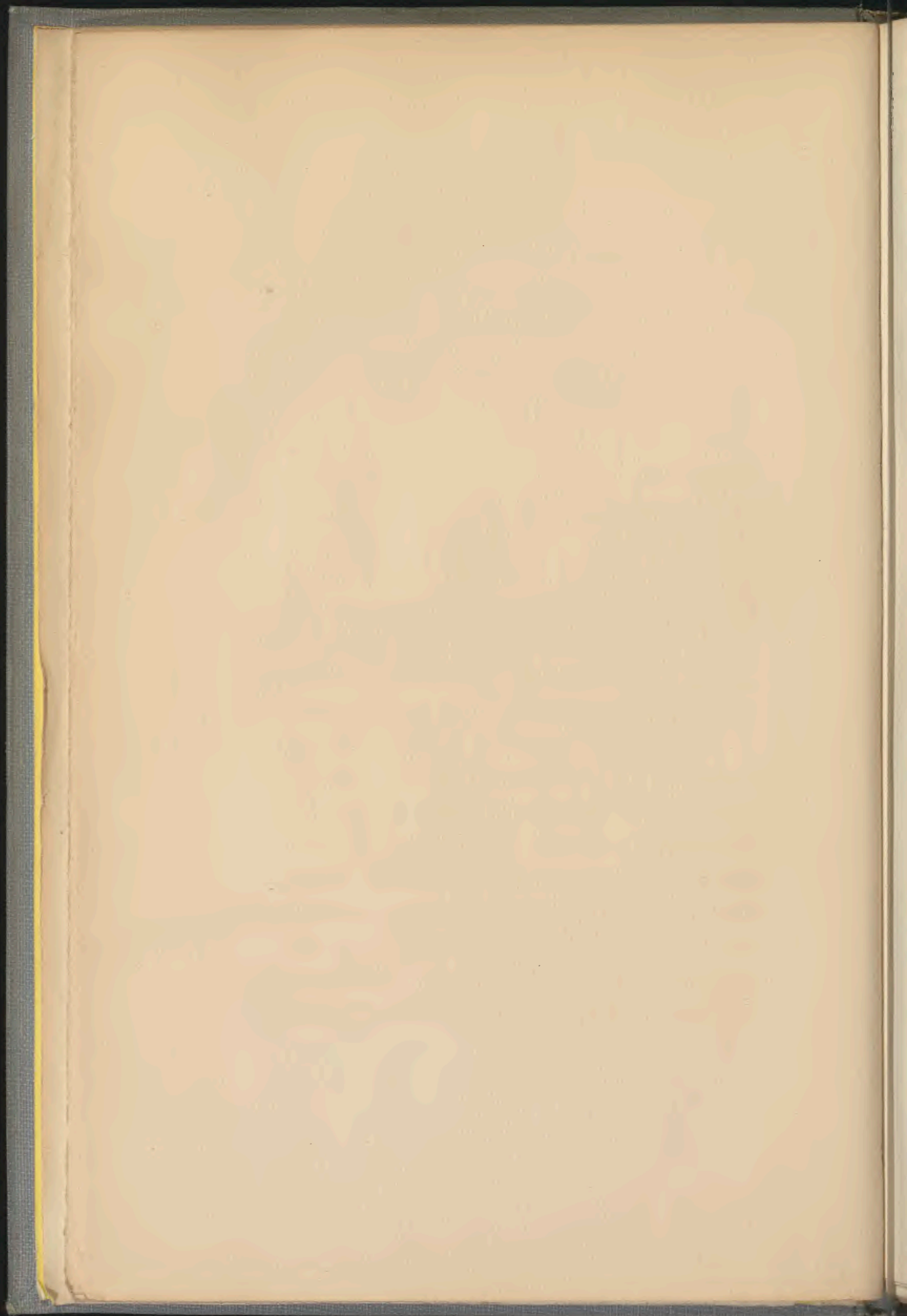
W. P.

MUSSELBURGH, *September* 1920.



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The man who can Putt is a
match for anyone.

THIRTY years ago I coined the aphorism which heads this page. It has stood the test of time, and is as true to-day as when I first made it. The statement was always the subject of much controversy, but I proved it correct by my victories in the numerous stake-matches I played; and the frequency with which you will hear the sentence to-day, uttered with all the ring of truism and conviction, is evidence that my assertion survives the controversy and has been proved right by experience. The dispute over the accuracy of the phrase was, I think, fiercest round the time I played the final challenge match of my career. That was my contest with Harry Vardon, in the year 1899. For fifteen years prior to that time I had engaged

in many stake-matches; the records of the game show that I was uniformly successful, and the great strength of my game was my ability to hole, with certainty, putts from two to three yards. I made a special study of putting; and when I was a boy, in the days of Musselburgh's pre-eminence in golf, there were many great putters, notably W. Park, senior, Bob Ferguson, Willie Campbell, and my uncle Mungo Park—each of whom was a rare model to copy. The Musselburgh greens were all natural. On a few were ridges, locally described as "sows' backs," and in order to circumvent the difficulties of holing along these ridges, we had to develop a knack in our putting of giving a hook or a slice to the ball.

At Musselburgh putting was a high art amongst the older professionals, and by them it was developed in a far greater degree than is the case amongst present-day golfers. The greens to-day are easier to play; they are so thoroughly nursed and dressed and watched over, that it is only in exceptional drought—and not always then, with modern efficiency

and ability to undertake large outlays—that they are exceptionally trying; but the older professionals had to play on the greens, not only as nature made them, but absolutely as nature kept them. There was no top-dressing or water laid on to defeat the parching heat of the summer, and, consequently, in the days of great money matches, the golfer who meant to succeed had to be a good putter; to reverse the maxim, the man who could not putt was no match for anyone.

To be able to putt, a man must know how. It is an art, but is an art which can be taught and, by perseverance, acquired. I belong to a race of Scottish professional golfers whose matches for big money stakes make some of the most illuminating pages in the history of the game. The famous school of professional golfers, I am able to recall, lived for golf and breathed the atmosphere of golf; they were surrounded by golf, and they devoted their whole time and thought to their profession. I was a believer in the old spirit of the challenge match which inspired my grandfather, my father, and my uncle. I played many

matches, and so long as I had the time to devote to playing golf, I sustained the traditions of my forebears by challenging the world. My father had an open challenge to the world for nine years. His challenge to play any man a home and home match for £100 appeared in *Bell's Life* (now the *Sporting Life*) regularly all these years, and in that challenge he specially named Allan Robertson. After I won my second open championship, my business in Musselburgh, Edinburgh, London and New York extended so rapidly that I was afforded very little time to play. When I won my second open championship, in 1889, I was twenty-five years of age, and, by comparison with the records of professionals who have since won prominence in the game, I may fairly claim that had I devoted my whole time to playing, and not to the business side of golf, I held a reasonable chance of adding to my record of championship victories. However, the game in 1889 and 1890 was entering on a boom which carried it to all parts of the United Kingdom, and, subsequently, to most corners of the world.

All my energies were demanded by my business, and not only was I launched on an extensive club and ball trade, but I was simply overwhelmed with commissions to lay out or reconstruct golf links all over the country. Weeks, and sometimes months, would elapse and I never had a game.

In 1893, the vanguard of English professional golf, which has proved such a splendid force in the popularising of the game, made a serious bid for the championship, which, in 1894, was won for the first time by an English professional—J. H. Taylor. Taylor repeated his success the succeeding year, and, following his second victory, a controversy arose over the merits of match play as opposed to stroke play. Scotsmen believed that a match provided the supreme test in golf, and, although at the time I was absorbed by my business, as Scotland looked to me, as the direct connecting link between modern Scottish professional match players and the old school, to uphold the national theory, I issued my challenge to the new champion. Taylor accepted. We played over Musselburgh and Richmond, and I won.

I proved then that a man who could putt was a match for anyone.

Three weeks after I defeated Taylor, I left for America, and for some years I had no time seriously to prepare for and play in the championship; but the list of the victories of the English division grew, and in the autumn of 1897 I made up my mind to put in a few months solid practice, polish up my game to the old standard, and make a real try for the open championship at Prestwick in 1898. To brighten matters up in the golfing world, and give myself some preparation, I issued my old challenge to the world at the beginning of 1898. I expected an acceptance from England, but Willie Fernie, of Troon, took it up, and the way I defeated him over Musselburgh and Troon confirmed my confidence that I was coming up to my old-time game. Then came the championship! At that time Harry Vardon was sweeping everything before him, and had done so for some time before. He was regarded as in a class by himself; and critics and writers of the game, notably Mr Hilton, assert to this day that Vardon,

in 1898 and 1899, was at his very zenith, and has never since touched the brilliance he displayed, or asserted such an evident superiority, as he did at that period; yet the record of that championship did something to prove that the man who can putt is a match for anyone. I claim that I have never met a golfer who was a better putter. I am no egotist. I simply wish to take you with me along the road, confidently determined that after studying my methods you will excel in the art of putting; and, if Vardon, at his zenith in 1898, just beat "the man who could putt" in the very narrowest way, as I am going to relate, it is surely a great tribute to the value of attaining superlative excellence in putting.

The story of the Open Championship at Prestwick in 1898 is, therefore, for the purpose of this book on putting, well worth telling. After the first round, it was a stern combat between Vardon and myself. At the end of the first round, the scores were:—

| | | | |
|--------------|---|---|----|
| Willie Park | . | . | 76 |
| Harry Vardon | . | . | 79 |

In the second round we each took 75, and at

the end of the first day I was well ahead of the field.

The scores were :—

| | | | |
|--------------|---|---|-----|
| Willie Park | . | . | 151 |
| Harry Vardon | . | . | 154 |

The newspaper descriptions of my play generally concur in the statement that "Willie Park, as usual, putted with excellence."

In the third round Vardon pulled a stroke off my lead, taking 77 against my 78. At the end of the third round, the aggregate scores were :—

| | | | |
|--------------|---|---|-----|
| Willie Park | . | . | 229 |
| Harry Vardon | . | . | 231 |

When the final round started, I was two strokes ahead, and at this stage the championship indubitably lay between Vardon and myself. At the ninth hole I had dropped a stroke, Vardon having done the first nine in 38 against my 39, and with nine holes to go the grand totals were :—

| | | | |
|--------------|---|---|-----|
| Willie Park | . | . | 268 |
| Harry Vardon | . | . | 269 |

The crowds were tremendous ; and Prestwick is not a good course for big attendances, as the spectators get congested. Vardon was playing two couples ahead of me ; and I therefore knew, with nine holes to go, that I still held the lead. At the tenth hole I got into the bunker, but after that I never slipped a stroke. I played with absolute steadiness. A reference to the scores of the finishing nine holes will show how the race for the championship progressed, hole by hole.

I drew level with Vardon's score at the eleventh, and took the lead from him at the twelfth, but as he had a wonderful three at the fourteenth, we were at this point again all even. At the 17th hole, it will be noted, Vardon's aggregate score and mine were the same. Shortly before I came to the 17th green, I heard the cheer on Vardon finishing, and, standing on the 18th teeing ground, I asked if anyone could tell me what Vardon had done the last hole in? I was told by several it was four, the par of the hole. I hit a beauty straight down the middle, and with my approach, I laid the ball four feet off

the hole. Examining the putt, I noticed that half way between my ball and the hole was a little bit of yarrow weed, like the top of a carrot, a sort of hard grub. It was on the exact line, and the only chance of holing the putt with the yarrow weed there was to skim over it with the putter laid back a little, and play firm at the back of the hole. I could have done it all right, but I just said to Fiery, my old caddie, "I have two to tie for the championship: I will make sure of the tie, and we will have a fine match for it the morn." I did not want to be second; it was a case of first or nowhere, so far as I was concerned, and I would have revelled in playing off a tie, I can assure you on that point, for I was playing as I wanted to play. There was the outside chance that, if I did bolt the ball at the hole in order that its course should not be deflected by the yarrow weed, its speed would jump the back of the hole and leave me a longer putt, as the green was very dry. So I made dead certain of the four and, as I thought, the tie. The ball actually dribbled round and lay on the very edge of the hole. I got my four, only to

receive the disappointing official news that Vardon had done the hole in three, and had beaten me by a single stroke. If I had not been misinformed, I should have taken every risk and gone hard at the hole; and it was still less consolation to be told that Vardon's drive to the last hole was right off the course, but that the ball hit a spectator and came back on to the right line of play, and he holed a three-yard putt to finish. I give the figures of those last memorable nine holes—the 64th to the 72nd of the championship in Vardon's great year. Aggregates for 63 holes:—

| | | | |
|--------------|---|---|-----|
| Willie Park | . | . | 268 |
| Harry Vardon | . | . | 269 |

Scores for last nine holes and aggregates at each hole in the 1898 open championship:—

| | Score at each hole | | Grand Aggregates | |
|-----------|--------------------|--------|------------------|--------|
| | Park | Vardon | Park | Vardon |
| 64th hole | 6 | 4 | 274 | 273 |
| 65th " | 4 | 4 | 278 | 277 |
| 66th " | 4 | 5 | 282 | 282 |
| 67th " | 4 | 5 | 286 | 287 |
| 68th " | 5 | 3 | 290 | 290 |
| 69th " | 5 | 5 | 295 | 295 |
| 70th " | 4 | 4 | 299 | 299 |
| 71st " | 5 | 5 | 304 | 304 |
| 72nd " | 4 | 3 | 308 | 307 |

I promptly issued a challenge to the world, and directed it specially to Vardon for a home-and-home match for £100. That was in July 1898, but I could get no acceptance. Vardon would not come to Musselburgh, and as time went on, I eventually offered to play on neutral greens. I named North Berwick as my course, and, at last, in order to fix the match, I waived my stipulation for a neutral course for Vardon, and agreed that the second half of the match be played on his home course at Ganton. The match was fixed for July 1899, and in June of that year Vardon won the open championship. It was his second championship in succession, his third in four years, and he was regarded as invincible.

In discussing the prospects of the match, some critics quoted against me, "the man who can putt is a match for anyone." In 1899, I was 34 years of age and Vardon was 28. Throughout the winter and spring I was deeply engaged on some of the great golf links of England, and had no time for practice. With constant night travelling, superintending course construction in various

parts of the country, I had lost a lot of weight (nearly a stone and a half); but six weeks before the match I determined to settle down to steady practice. . . . The contest excited interest throughout the golfing world, and the crowd which followed the play at North Berwick has never since been equalled at a golf contest. It was a wonderful crowd, reaching from tee to hole on both sides in dense masses, but it behaved perfectly; all were golfers. The history of the match is familiar. We halved the first ten holes, and then, holing one long putt off the edge of the green, I won the eleventh. Vardon was playing brilliantly. Off the tee, and approaching, he was as perfect as a machine. But that day I proved to the last syllable that the man who can putt is a match for anyone. North Berwick is a seaside course, full of testing shots. I played Vardon thirty-six holes when Vardon was admittedly at his greatest. There were heavy bets on the result of the first round. At the end of 18 holes I was one up on Vardon. I had putted in deadly fashion throughout. At Point Garry I played some-

thing of an historic shot. I was amongst the rocks, and from there played a firm left-handed shot to the green, backed it up by holing a four-yard down-hill putt, and Vardon missing a two-yard putt on the side of the hill, I won a hole which looked like a certain loss. Over 36 holes at North Berwick, a neutral course, Vardon, at his zenith, was dormy and finished two up on me, and it was by putting I held him.

In the second half at Ganton I took little interest. No great stake match in golf had ever been played prior to that time beyond the sound of the sea. Ganton was a moderate English inland links, and local knowledge was invaluable. I only took a few days practice for the final section, and, developing a hook in my driving, I lost. The passing of a year, from the time I issued my challenge until the match was played, made a great difference, as I was much absorbed in business activities; but the opinion held as to my play by leaders of golf in Scotland was shown seven years later when, before the International Foursome challenge was issued on behalf of

Scotland, I was invited to be one of the representatives of my country. The invitation was left in my hands for ten days; but I was so completely out of practice that it would have required a steady three months to train up for such a match, and as I could not spare this time I declined.

By those little inside peeps into golfing history, I think I have shown you that "the man who can putt is a match for anyone"; so come with me and see how it is all done.

About the Putter.

THE first consideration is to get the right club with which to putt. There are many different kinds of putters. There are broad-soled, narrow-soled, bent-necked, straight-necked, long-shafted, short-shafted, light and heavy putters. In fact there is practically no end to the variety, but the merits claimed for them are extremely doubtful.

A great deal depends upon the club. People often hear the expression, "A bad workman blames his tools." That may be so, nevertheless a good workman must have good tools. So, in the choosing of the putter, one must know what will be required of the club, what difficulties may be encountered while using it, and how these difficulties may best be overcome. The club must be one which can be used for any putt, and the club which fulfils this is as follows :—It should have a

narrow sole; the face should be lofted and the blade long; the neck should be bent as in the original bent-necked putter, popularly known as "Willie Park's goose-necked putter"; while the shaft should be long.

Each point in this club had its definite advantage and use, all combining together to render the club the best of its kind. The club was designed by me and was the fruit of my own experience.

The loft in the face and the narrow sole enable the player to play the ball from a cupped lie. The narrow sole gets more under the ball than a broad-sole putter would, while the loft in the club picks the ball out of the cuppy lie and does not turn it off the true line to the hole. If a straight-faced putter had been used, it would have driven the ball into the face of the cup, consequently making the ball jump out and in all probability turning it off the direction in which the player wished it to travel.

The bend in the neck of the putter makes the stroke more of a pull than a push. It is much easier to pull the ball into the hole

than it is to push it in, and this is the great advantage of the goose-necked putter over a straight-necked putter.

Another advantage in using a putter with a lofted face is that the player is able to stand nearer the hole and more in front of the ball when he has a clear lie. The reason for standing more in front of the ball, when you have a clear line to the hole, is to do away with the loft, as the ball is not cupped. Incidentally the player will much more easily blot out the hole from view when hitting the ball, if he is standing more in front of the ball.

A club with a long blade of, say, three and seven-eighth inches, makes putting much easier than would a short-bladed club. The long blade emphasises any mistake in the squaring of the club in the direction the player wishes his ball to travel. A mistake in the squaring of the club with the line can therefore be much more easily seen and corrected when using a club with a long blade. Now, as the holing of the putt depends to a very great extent on the correct squaring of the club, the length of the

blade is a very important matter. Few seem to have realised this, but I warn you that the superiority of the long-bladed club over the short-bladed one cannot be treated lightly.

In playing with a long-shafted putter the grip is the same length up the club as it would have been with a short-shafted club. This, of course, leaves a part of the shaft above the grips, and it is this which makes all the difference between a good putter and a bad one. The part of the shaft above the grip serves as a weight and pulls back the head of the club, and less effort is thus required in making a shot. This improves the touch of a player, and as touch should be cultivated in every possible way, the length of the shaft is a very important point.

The shaft should be stiff and thin, as this gives a better feel of the head of the club.

The grip should also be thin, this being another aid to the improvement of a player's touch.

Another important point to notice is the perfect balance of the putter. The shaft should be perfectly straight, a point easily

ascertained by looking along the shaft and at the same time making it revolve.

On slow greens a heavier club should be used than on fast greens. If the green is slow, a light club will need to be taken much further back in the making of a stroke in order to get distance, and this makes the stroke more uncertain. By this, of course, I do not mean that a practice be made of changing putters at different greens. Indeed, it merely refers to the changing about of the district or country.

About the Ball.

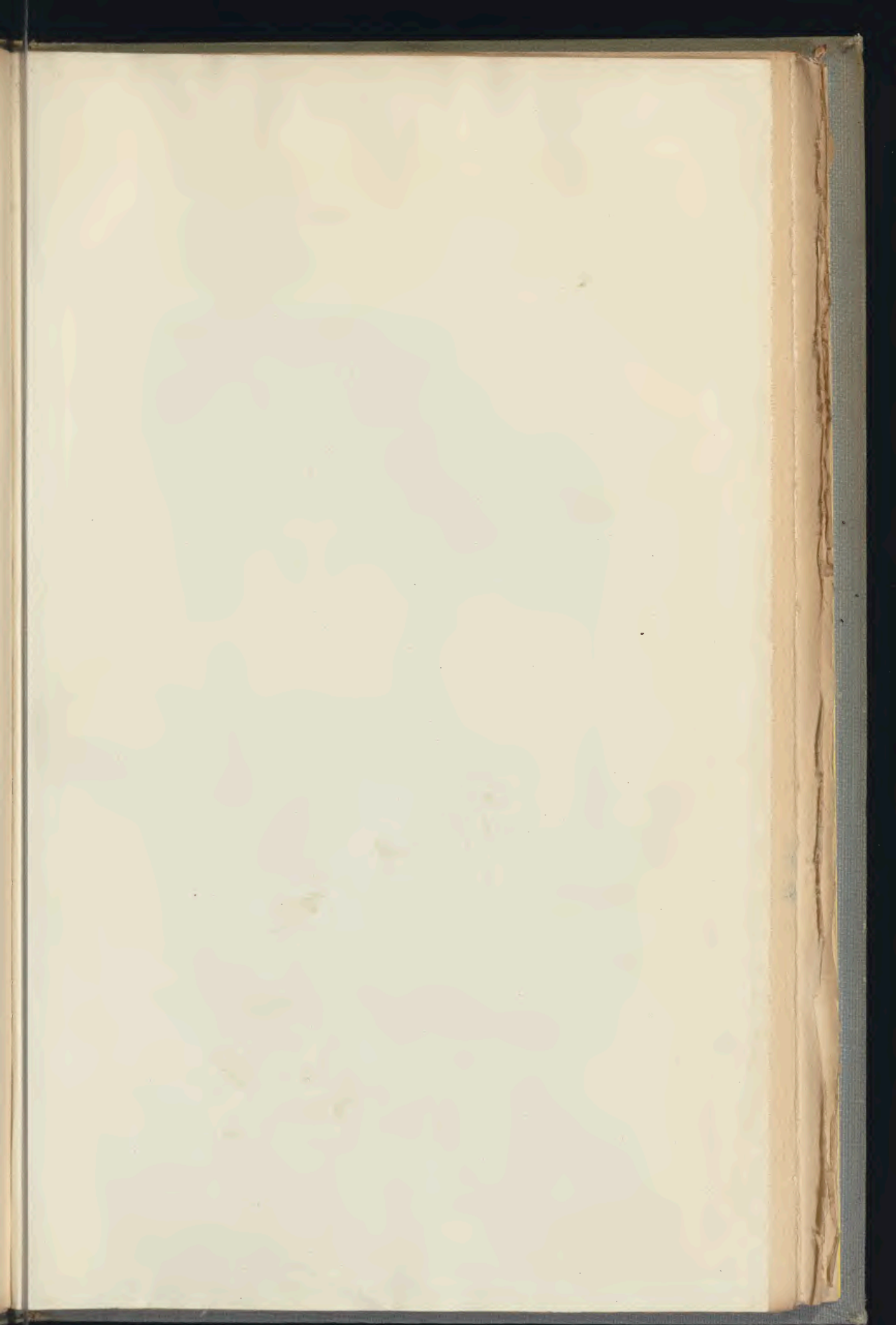
IN putting, it is very important that the player should know his ball. A light ball behaves differently from a heavy one on the green, and equally so with a hard ball; of the two the hard ball is the better to play with, as the soft one is inclined to jump about when hit. The chief thing, however, is to be accustomed to the ball with which you are playing.

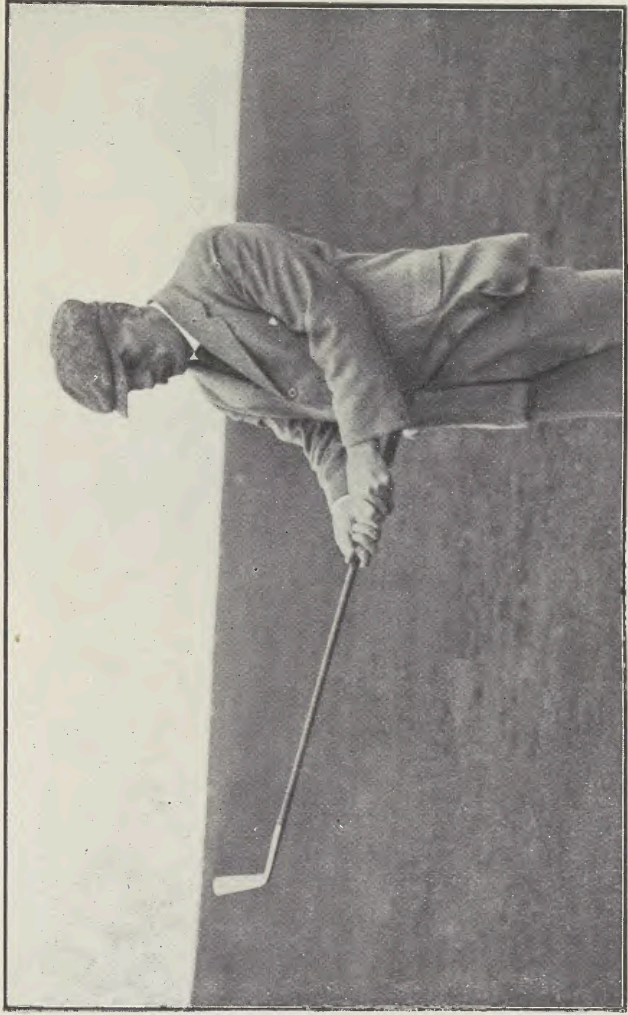
It is a bad thing to change about from a heavy ball to a light one, or *vice versa*, and equally bad to change from a large one to a small one, or from a hard one to a soft one. This is specially true on the putting green. A player who is in the habit of playing with a heavy ball becomes accustomed to it, and in time gets to know how much it will fall on a side putt. If he changes his ball for a light one, he will find that his calculations



will have to be altered also. It is therefore advisable to keep to one kind of ball.

If for some reason the player does change his ball, he should make a point of practising with the ball until he is quite accustomed to it before he plays, otherwise he cannot expect to obtain a good result.





My Grip.

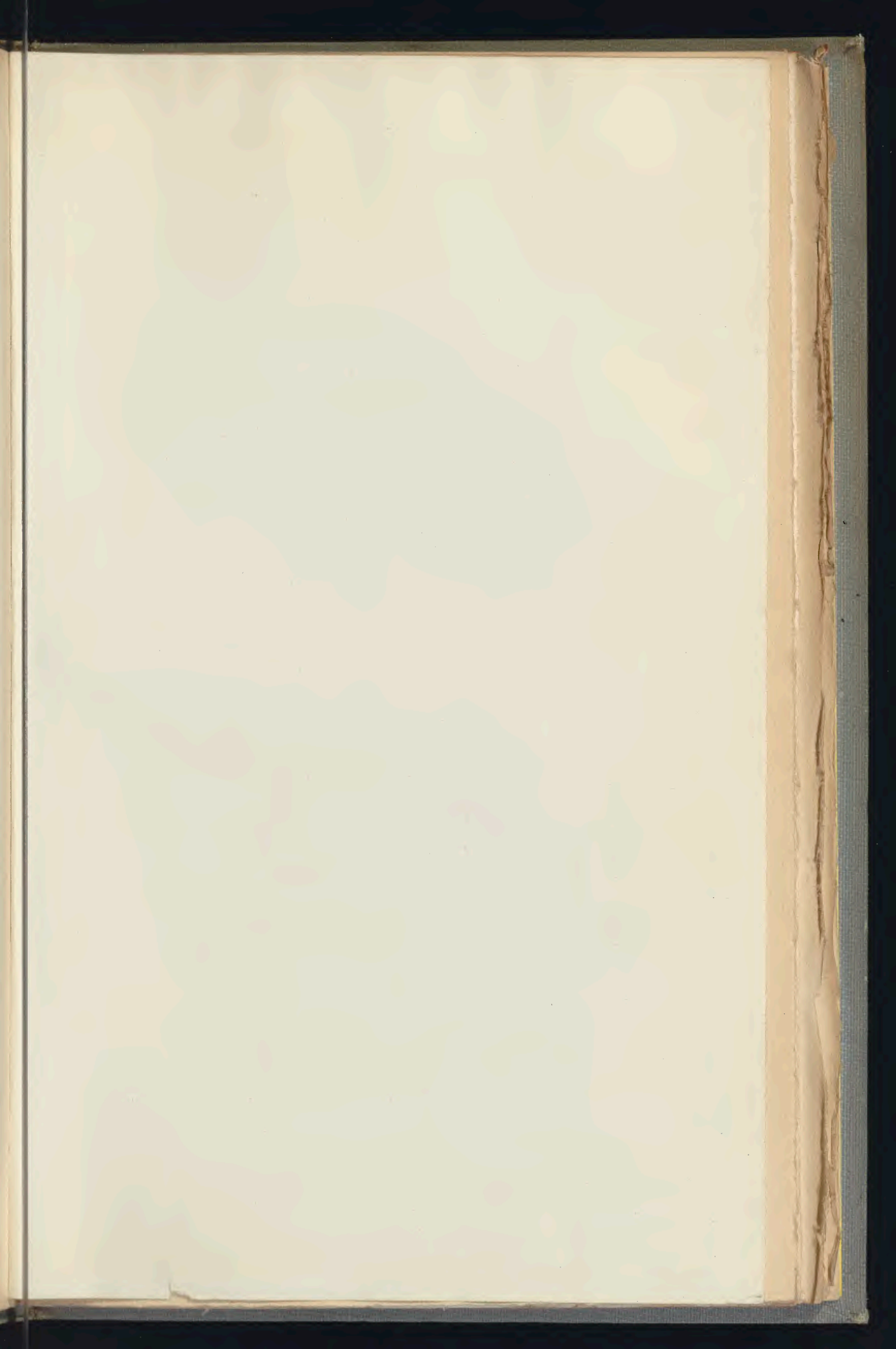
My left hand is used only to steady the club and give command over it. I grip with the four fingers of my right hand on the shaft, and the thumb of my right hand points between down and across the shaft. I do not use an overlapping grip, but my hands are close together, and you can see that is so by the slight pressure of my right hand against my left thumb. The position of my hands is very clearly shown in several of the subsequent pictures, and you will always notice my right thumb is partly across and down the shaft and my hands close together.

About the Grip.

I BELIEVE in the grip with the four fingers of the right hand on the shaft, and the right thumb lying across and pointing down. Some people would feel more comfortable with the overlapping grip, but this brings the left hand too much into play, and therefore I do not consider it so good as the former grip. The putter is held with both hands, but all the hitting should be done with one hand, and that one the right hand. If both hands are used, the one works against the other, and the result is not so satisfactory. In using both hands, the left helps to steady the club and give more command over it, but it must always be borne in mind that it is the right hand that guides the club and strikes the ball. To prevent the left hand taking part, let the left elbow touch the left side.

The fingers which play the most important

part in the grip are the forefinger and the thumb of the right hand. You get the touch from these fingers, and these grip the club more firmly than the others, which only rest lightly on the shaft.





My Stance for a Short Putt.

I take up an easy and comfortable position. I have no faith in freakish attitudes. I do not believe in stooping down behind the ball and looking towards the hole and then going behind the hole and looking towards the ball. By doing this you see two different directions, only one of which is of use, and that is the line from the ball to the hole. You can best get the line by standing by the ball, in the way I show you, and looking down on the ground over which the ball will pass.

About the Stance.

For Long Putts.

TAKE up an easy and comfortable position, with the toe of the right foot in line with and about five inches from the ball. The left foot should be well in front of the ball and the body turned towards the hole. The player should stand fairly upright, as this gives a more commanding view of the ground between the ball and the hole.

For Short Putts.

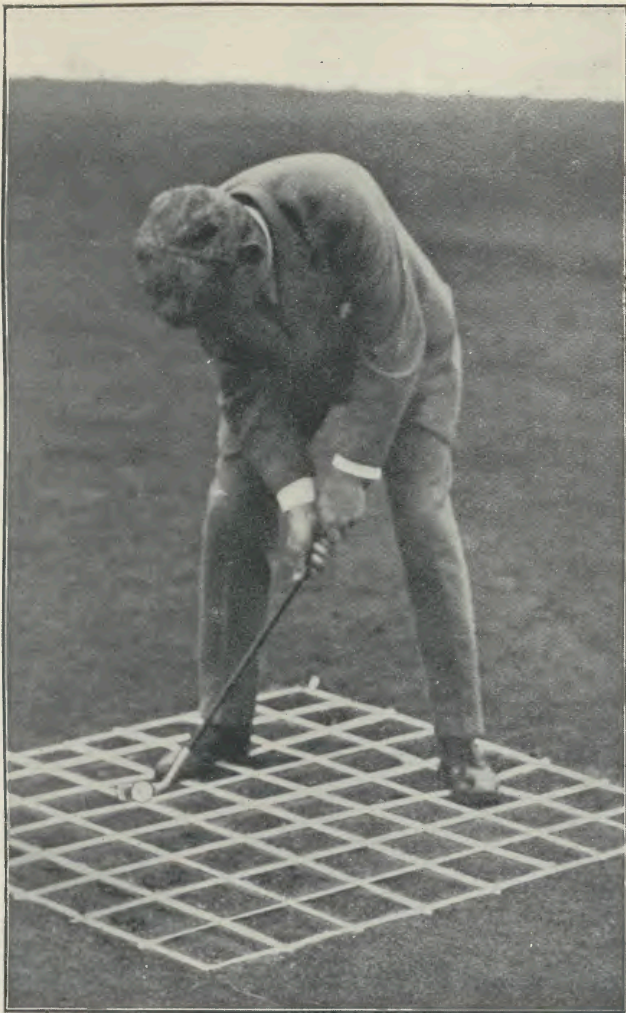
THE stance in this case is practically the same as for long putts, but the player should stoop more, gripping the shaft further down.

Study of the Grass and speed of a Green.

IN putting it is very important to be able to judge the "speed" of the green. Greens vary—some may be hard, some soft, some with close cut grass, and some with longer grass. A green which is hard and of close cut grass tends to increase the velocity of the ball, while soft greens, or those with fairly long grass, will be inclined to retard its progress.

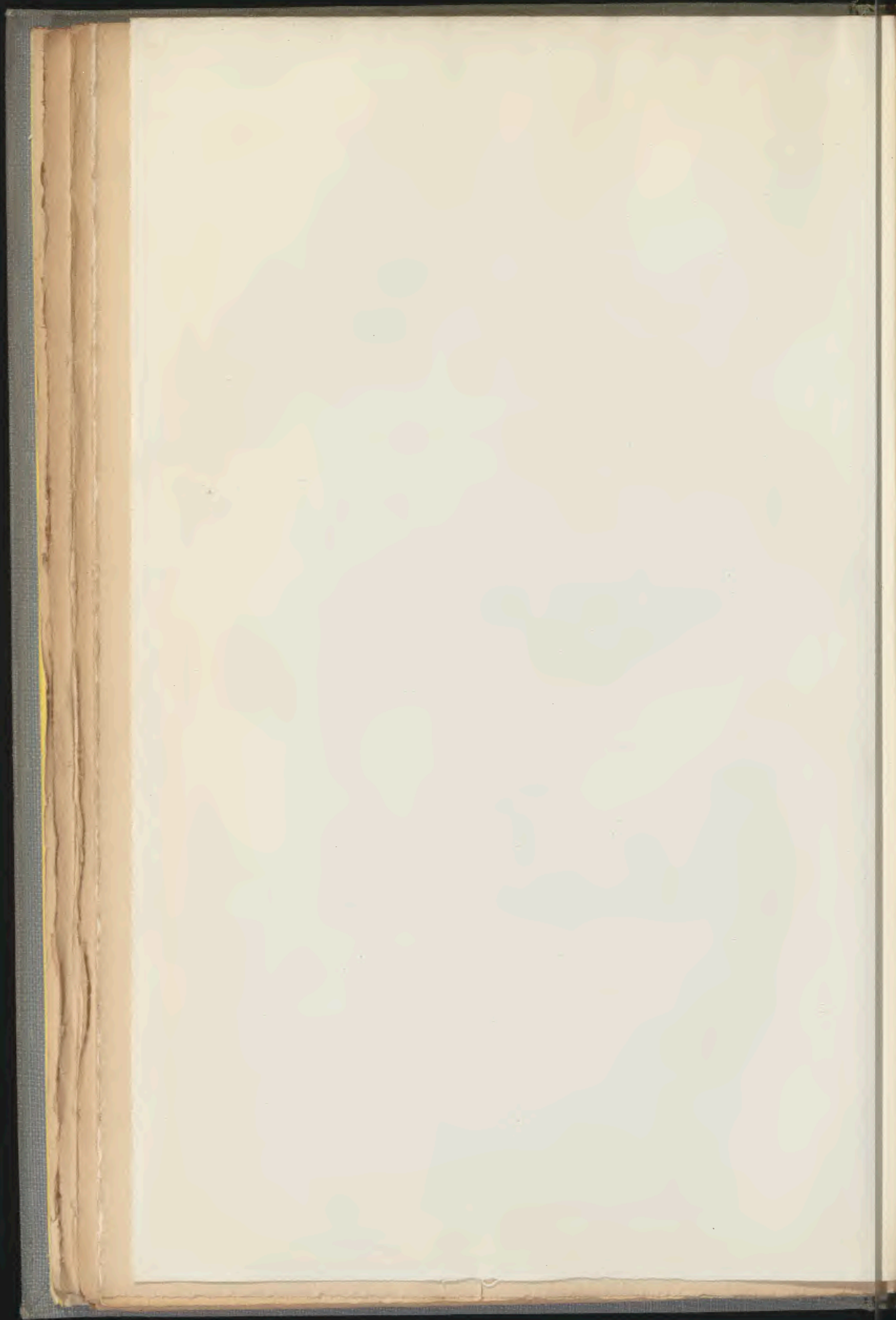
To determine to which class the green belongs, walk over it and ascertain the feel of the ground under foot. This will give you a very good idea of the strength of the green.

When a green is cut the blades of the grass are bent over in one direction; notice whether the lie of the grass is with or against the run of the ball. Having done this, hit the ball



More about My Stance for a Short Putt.

The squares are six inches, and you will notice my right toe is just inside the square, or about five inches from the ball, and that my left toe is eighteen inches nearer the hole than the ball, and my body is turned slightly towards the hole. This stance makes the distance of the putt appear and feel less than it is.



according to the nature of the green and turf. If the lie of the cut is against you, you will require to give the ball more strength than if the lie of the cut of the grass is towards the hole.

To play a Long Putt.

ALL putts may be roughly divided into short putts and long putts. Taking long putts first, any putt more than five or six feet from the hole may be considered under this heading.

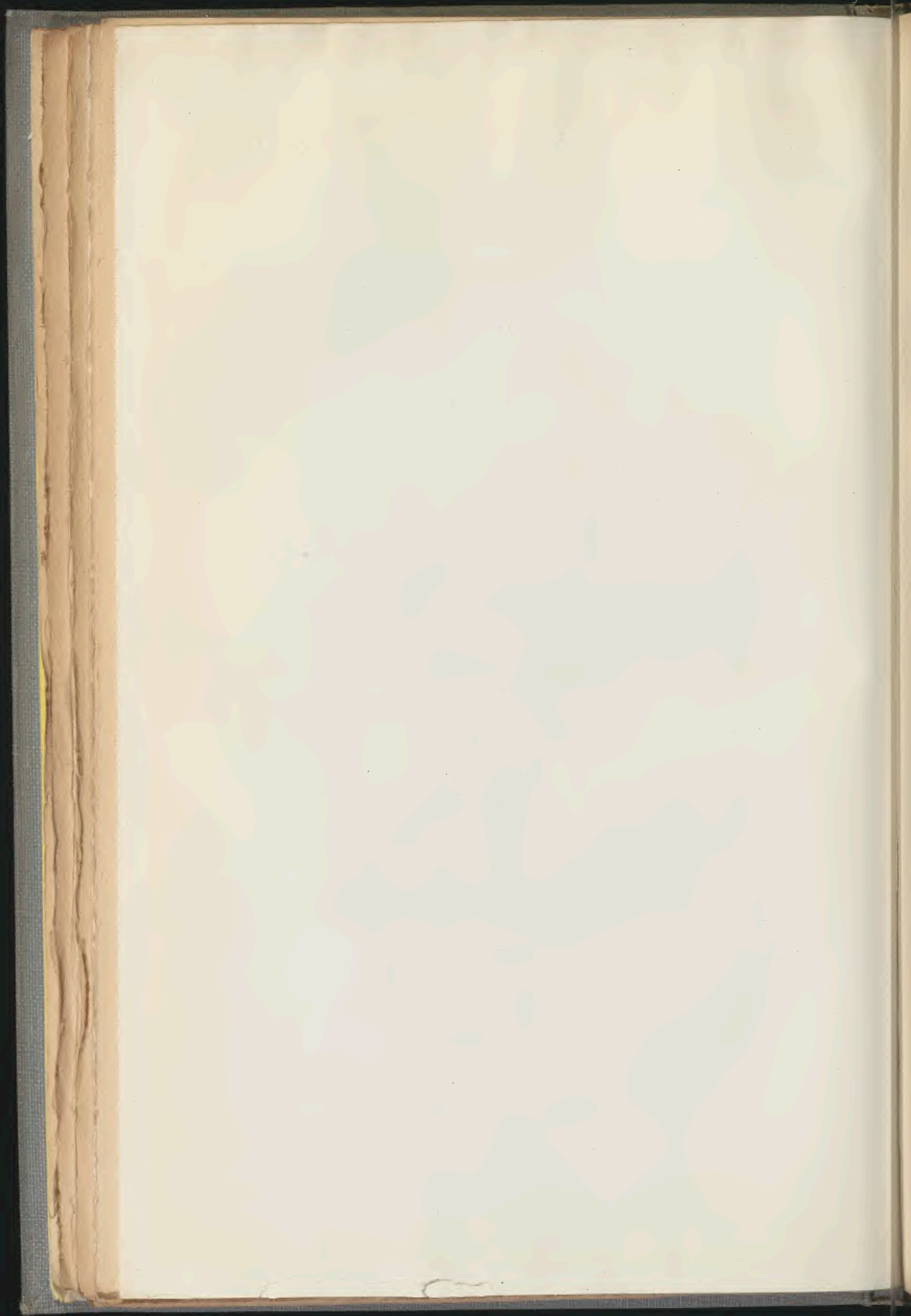
Some players, when they get a putt of about fifteen or twenty yards in length, simply try to place the ball near the hole. If, however, they would only try to hole the putt from any distance, they would find that they succeeded remarkably often.

In playing a long putt, the player should first impress upon his mind's eye the distance between the ball and the hole. This can be best done by walking from the ball to the hole and looking backwards and forwards. By doing this, when the ball is finally addressed, the player should have a replica of the distance in his mind.



I Pause to Putt.

Once I have determined on the line, I look at the ball and pause; I concentrate on the ball, and my eyes are so steadily on the ball that I blot the hole entirely out of my sight. I never see the hole when I finally settle to hit the ball. If you want to hole short putts, it is imperative you concentrate on the ball and never see the hole.



Study of the Line.

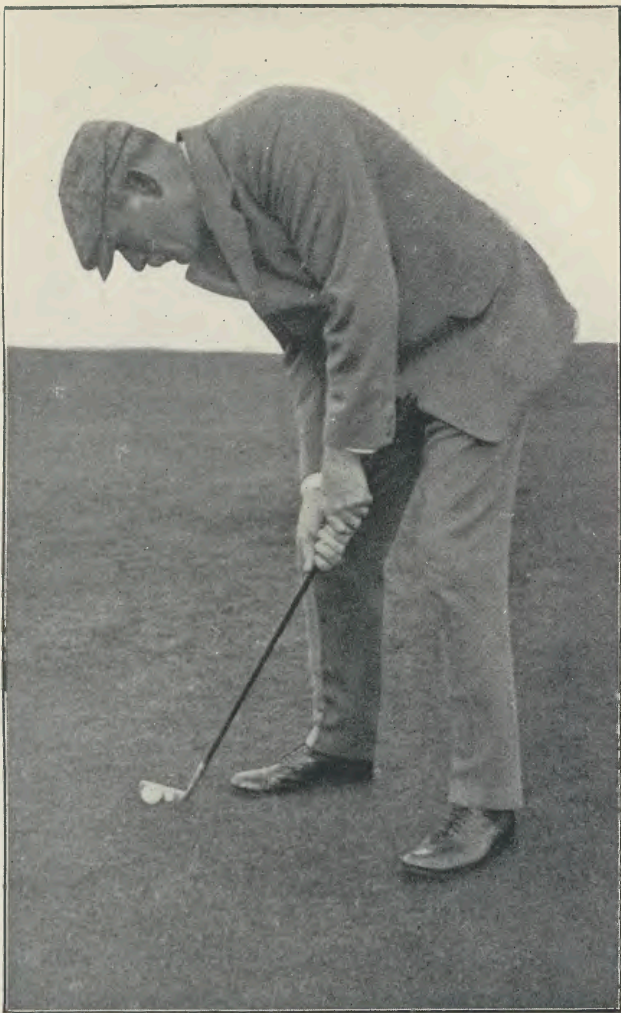
THE line which is to be taken to the hole must now be decided upon. Most players look for the directions to the hole by stooping down behind the ball and looking towards the hole, and then going behind the hole and looking towards the ball. In doing this, however, the player sees two different directions, only one of which is of any use. The right line is that seen by looking from the ball to the hole, and this can also be got by simply standing by the ball and looking down on the ground over which it will have to pass. This is one of the most difficult points, and requires considerable practice. With time, however, the player will be able to pick out the line he should take, immediately he looks along the ground.

Hitting the Ball.

THE stance and grip for a long putt have already been described, and the next point to be considered is the hitting of the ball.

After the player has determined the distance and line, he should look at the ball and pause before he attempts to send it on its way. This pause enables the player to blot the hole out of his sight, and there is now little likelihood of his allowing his eye to wander from the ball to the hole while in the act of playing the putt. It is imperative to concentrate on the ball and never to see the hole when finally settling to play your stroke.

In playing the stroke, the wrists act on the same principle as a hinge, and the club is taken straight back. The club should be kept just clear of the ground. The ball should be hit "kindly" with a slow backward and forward



Another View of My Position when I Pause to Putt.

This picture is taken from a different angle to the one on the preceding page, and will give you an impression of my position when I pause to putt. You will notice how I bend over the ball and keep my head down. Players unaccustomed to stooping feel a sensation of blood rushing to the head, and to eradicate this weakness they should practice putting in a stooping posture for some minutes.



movement bending the right wrist. For a long putt, of course, the arms may have to be used to get distance, but this should not alter the movement of the wrists or change the pendulum motion in any way.

On the forward movement, the club should be raised just enough to keep it clear of the ground when hitting the ball. The club should only hit the ball and not the ball and the ground. Even after the ball has been hit the club should not touch the green.

At one time I used to hold the putter so that the heel rested on the ground, while the toe was raised about half an inch off the ground. This I found to be very effective. The reason for holding the point of the club above the ground is to enable the player to hit the ball high, thus making it keep close to the ground while travelling towards the hole. A ball properly hit high up on the centre does not jump. It is quite a good way to hit the ball; but after putting for four hours a day, with six balls, on my own putting green at Inveresk, I found the method I have already described an improvement.

To get the distance, the ball must be hit clean—that is, by the middle part of the blade of the club. If the ball is hit by the heel at one time, by the toe another time, and perhaps half-topped a third time, even if the right amount of force was put into the stroke, the ball will go a different length each time. This is very confusing, and makes putting quite uncertain. The player must hit the ball with the middle part of the blade each time, and with thorough practice this can be done.

Let the club follow after the ball in the direction you wish the ball to travel. Do not, however, look up to see if the ball is going into the hole, but expect to find it in; wait until you think the ball has reached the hole, and then look up.



I Hit the Ball.

This picture discloses a secret. Note the distance I come back to hit a short putt,—a putt up to four or five feet. I take the club very slowly back, I have it under absolute control, and I hit the ball “kindly.” I keep the club just clear of the ground. I only hit the ball, and never the ball and the ground, and by keeping clear of the ground I hit the ball high on its centre, thus making it keep close to the ground while travelling towards the hole.



To play a Short Putt.

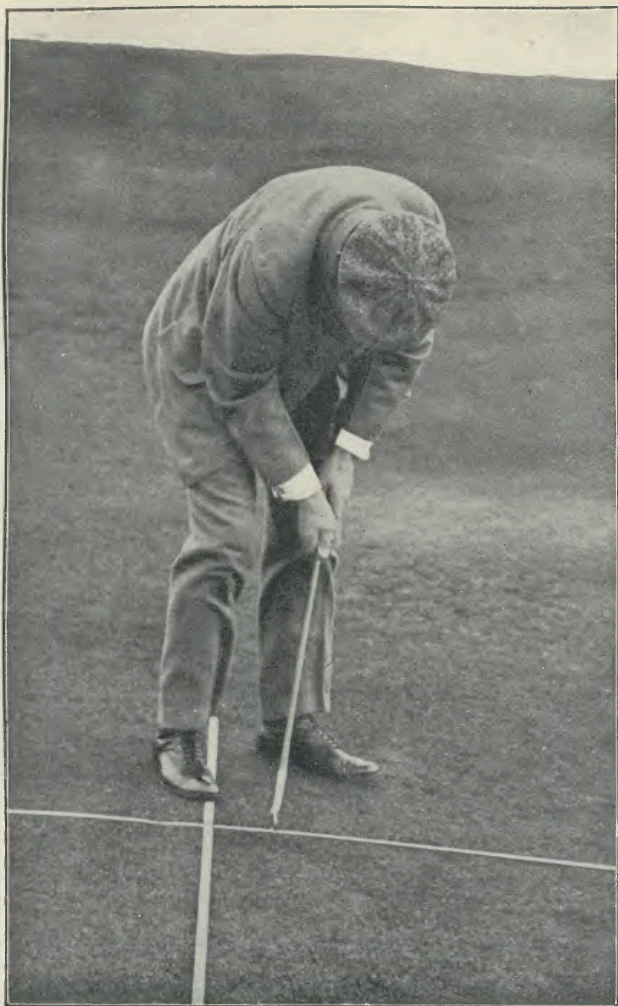
A SHORT putt may be considered as one within about five feet of the hole. The stance and grip have already been spoken of, and the movement in this case is almost the same as for playing a long putt. Here, however, the wrists do all the work, the body and arms being kept quite still. Also, in drawing the club back, an eye can, so to speak, be kept on the direction in which it is going without looking away from the ball. If in the backward movement a mistake has been made, this mistake may be rectified when the club is brought down in the forward movement. The actual hitting of the ball is as described for a long putt, but the follow-through is slightly different. Few people pay much attention to the follow of a short putt, and this is a great mistake. Usually, therefore, the follow-through is simply a "taking-off" of

the stroke. This is not so ; the club should really be stopped decisively when it has described an arc of about six inches after the hitting of the ball. By this I do not mean the club should be stopped jerkily, but that there should be no wavering or irresolute finish to the stroke. The movement throughout is slow and steady, and its termination must be definite.

When playing a short putt, there are three different lines to the hole. The first is to play in a direct line to the hole ; the second is to play to the right and put a hook on the ball ; and the third is to play to the left and put a slice on the ball.

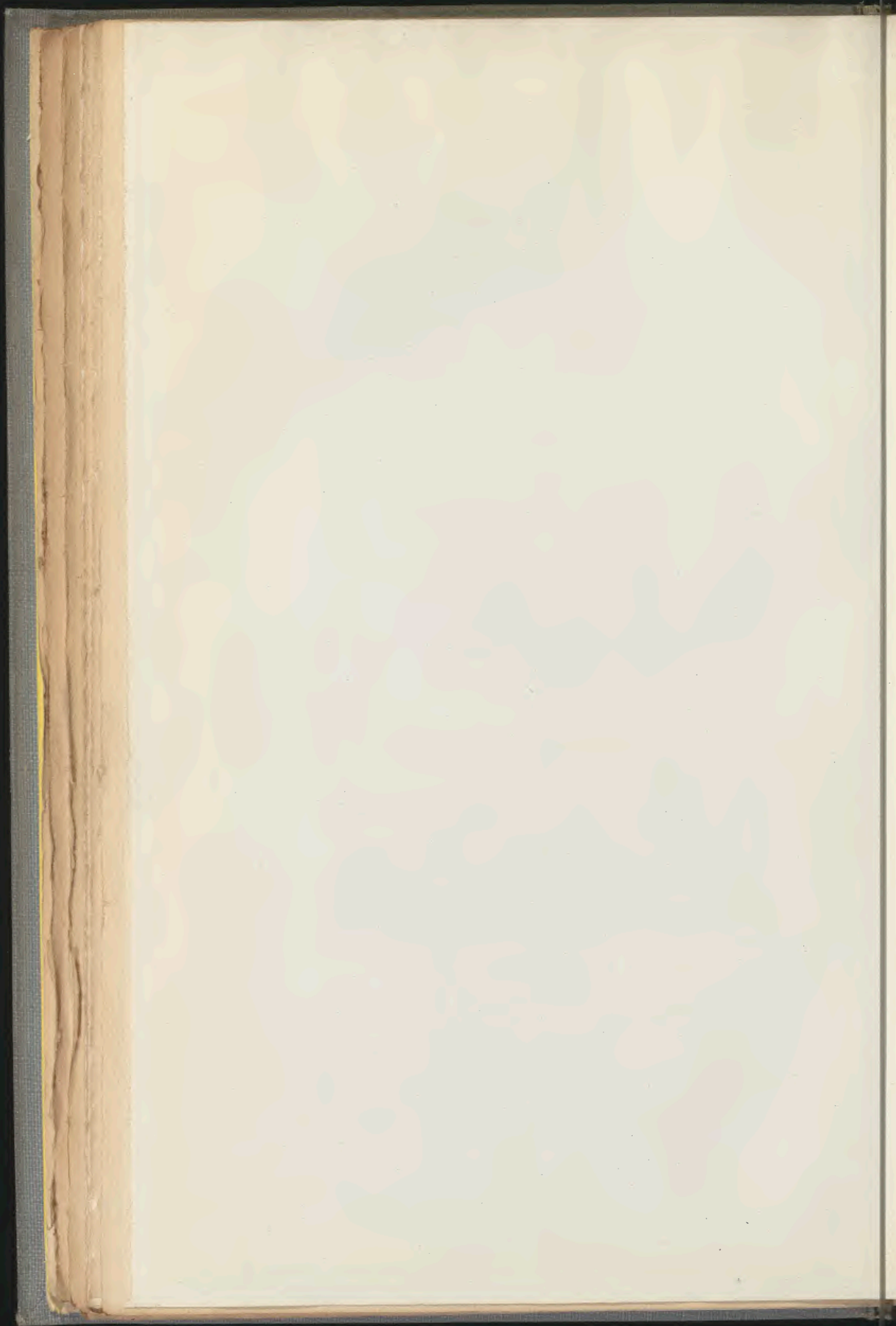
In playing straight for the hole, the putt is played as has just been described for a short putt. Here the movement is straight and forward with a short, straight follow-through.

To put a hook on the ball, the backward movement of the putter is more towards the player, while the forward movement is away from the player. The follow-through is also short, and the finish decisive. In this case, however, the club does not face straight for



My Forward Movement.

Even after hitting the ball I do not allow the club to touch the green. I hit the ball clean with the centre of the blade, but the follow through is very important. The club should be stopped decisively when it has described an arc of about six inches after hitting the ball. It is not a jerky stop. The whole movement is slow, steady, and the termination definite. The two pictures of hitting a short putt tell how well controlled, slow, deliberate, and definite is the stroke. During the whole stroke I have kept my body and head absolutely still, and I never look up until I think the ball has had more than time to get into the hole.



the hole, but to the right of it, the forward movement being simply continued away from the player.

Of the three ways of holing a putt, I found it easiest to use the hook. When the player has a ridge or some other obstruction which would be likely to deflect the ball off the straight line to the hole, the hook is most effective. It is perhaps the most difficult to master, but once mastered it is a great aid.

To slice the ball round by the left side, the backward movement of the club is outward away from the player, while the forward movement is inward and towards the player.

The follow-through is similar to the follow-through of the hook, only, of course, the club finishes facing the left of the hole.

When a player wishes to hook or slice a ball, he must know how much hook or slice he will require to put on the ball to make it travel along the line he wishes it to follow.

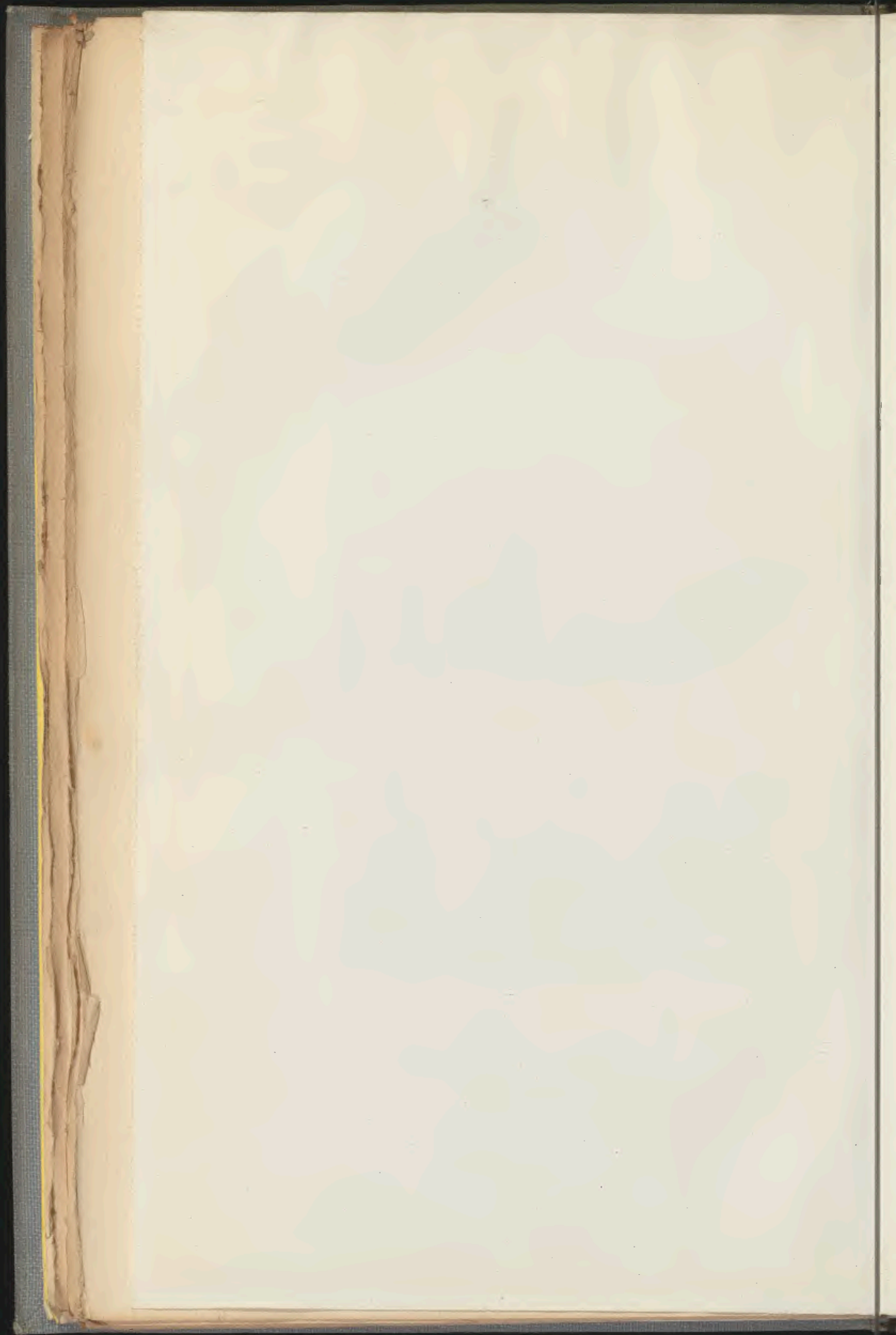
By using a lofted putter and holding the blade over at an angle of a little over ninety degrees, a certain amount of hook can be put

on the ball. The only thing required of the player now is the ability to take the putter straight back and forward, thus making the ball spin to the left, and at the same time travel forward.



My Stance for a Long Putt.

I stand for a long putt very much as I do for a short putt, only a little more upright. I try to hole every putt, no matter how long. I get the line by walking from the ball to the hole, and get the distance into my mind before studying the line for the putt, just as I describe I do for a short putt.



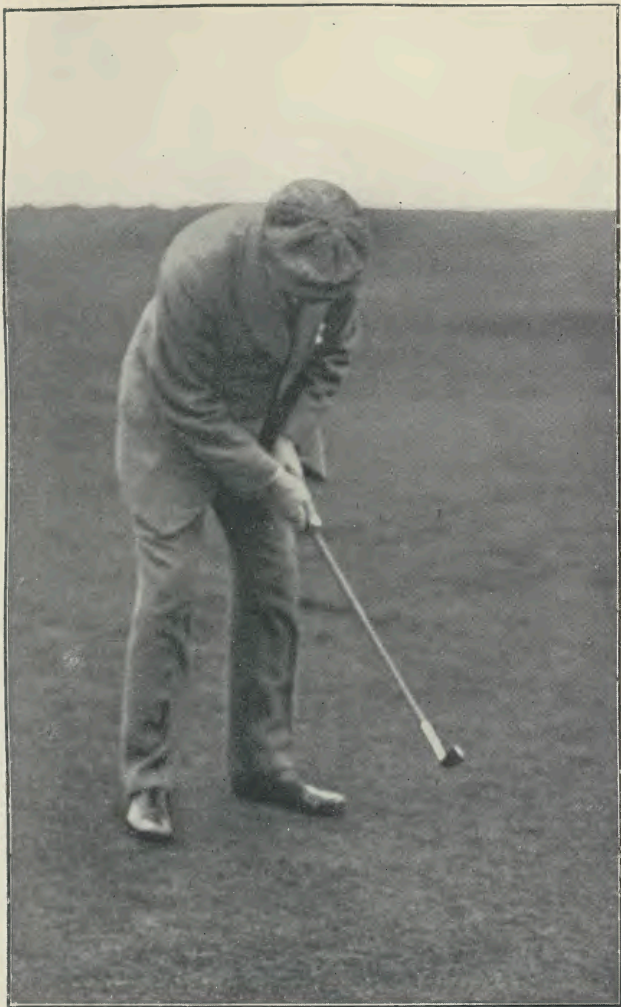
To play a Sidehill Putt.

WHEN the player has a putt on the side of a slope, say, two or three yards in length, there is more than one line to the hole. The line taken depends entirely upon how much force is to be put into the stroke. A ball played on a slope falls so much, according to the grade of the slope. If the player plays to hit the back of the hole, that is, with force enough to take the ball a little past the hole, the line taken should be lower than if the player wishes to drop his putt—that is, play it with just enough strength to reach the hole. I always played with the exact strength to drop the ball into the hole, and was consequently known as a “dropping putter.” This method of dropping a putt does away with the risk of running out of holing distance.

When the slope is on the right, the ball may also be holed by putting a slice on the ball.

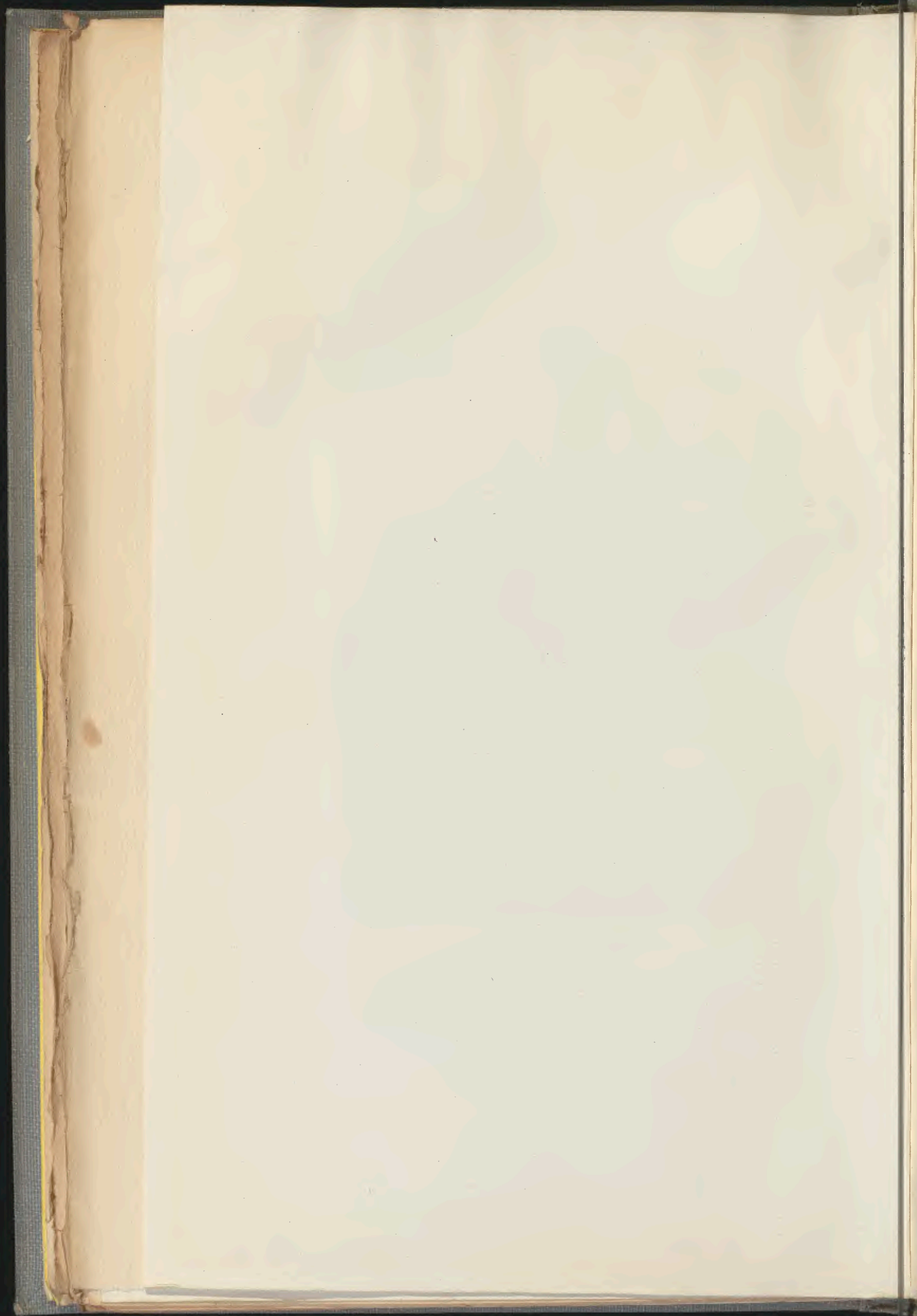
This acts against the slope of the hill, and the borrow is much lower than it would be in the other two methods.

Similarly, with the slope on the left, the putt may be holed by putting a hook on the ball, the hook also acting against the slope of the hill.



Hitting a Long Putt.

I hit the ball in the same way as I do a short putt, but the follow through is different and, of course, to get the distance, the arms may have to be used, but this should not alter the movement of the wrists or change the pendulum motion. The ball must be hit clean, and let the club follow through in the direction you wish the ball to travel. It is as imperative in a long putt, as in a short putt, that you do not move your head until you have given the ball time to reach the hole.



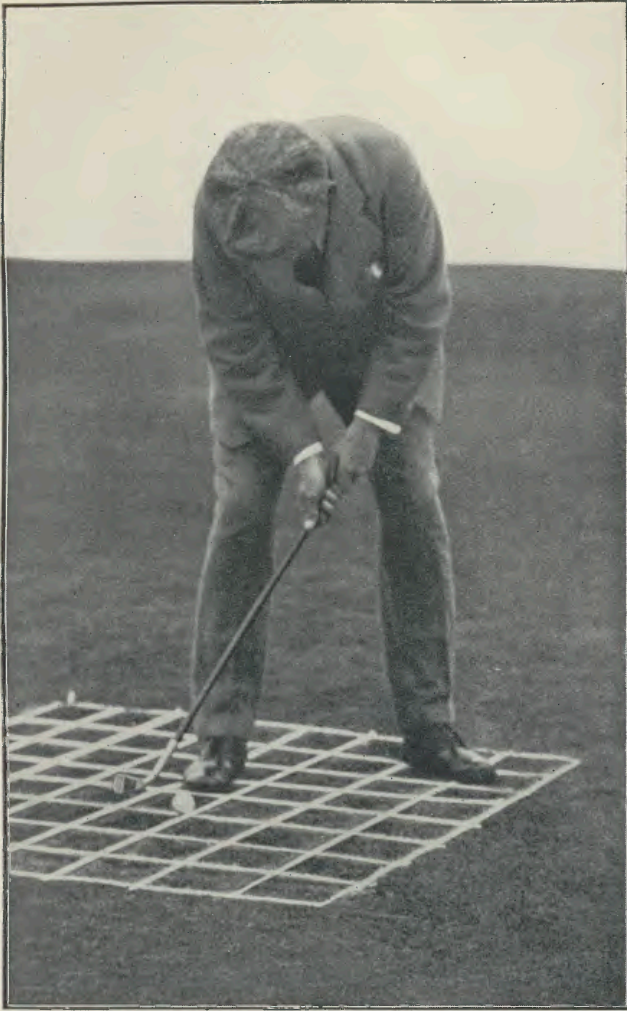
To play an Uphill Putt.

IN playing an uphill putt, the best method is to drop the ball into the hole. It could, of course, be holed by using either the slice or the hook, but these only make the putt more difficult. Always try to hole the putt, but rather be short than past the hole. A downhill putt is much more difficult to hole than an uphill one; a two feet downhill putt is much more difficult to hole than a four feet uphill putt.

To play a Downhill Putt (Straight).

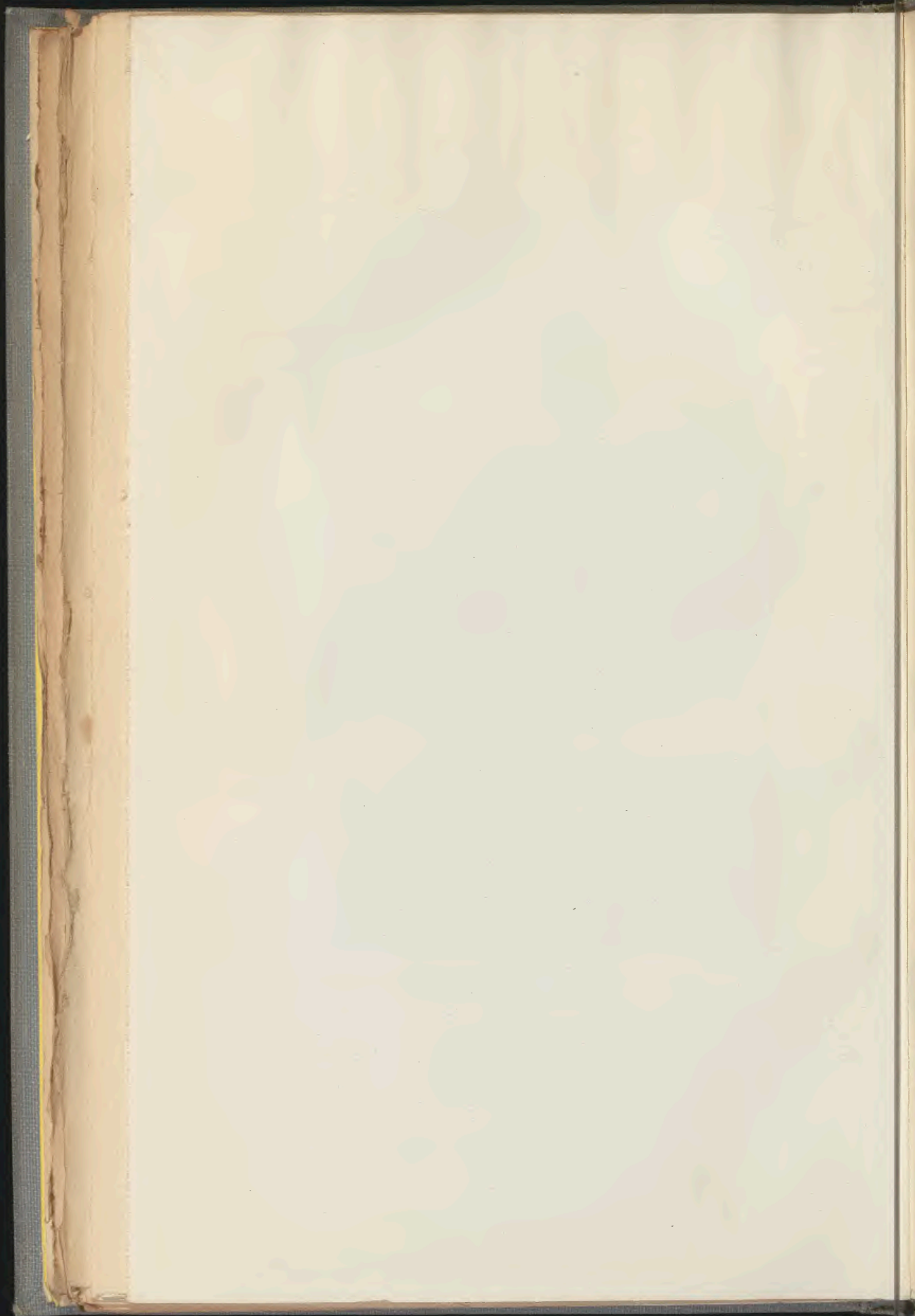
IN playing a straight downhill putt, it is purely a question of being able to play the ball with the right amount of strength to take it to the hole. It needs a very delicate touch, and it is this fact that makes this kind of putt so difficult.

There is no such thing as "under cutting," or putting a drag on a downhill putt, or any other kind of putt. The putt is essentially a stroke in which the ball is kept rolling over the ground. The only time a ball can revolve backwards and still travel in a forward direction is when the ball is in the air. No ball can roll forward and be revolving backwards at the same time. This is what people are really saying when they speak about under cutting a putt or putting a drag on it.



To put Slice or Hook for Sidehill Putts.

If the slope is on the left, slice can be put on the ball. A short sidehill putt is very difficult to hole, and good putters can put spin or, as the Scots say, "doze" on the ball. In the illustration I have drawn the club back and, by cutting through the ball as I finish in the next picture, I put slice or spin from right to left on the ball and it bites along the side of the hill and holds up against the slope.



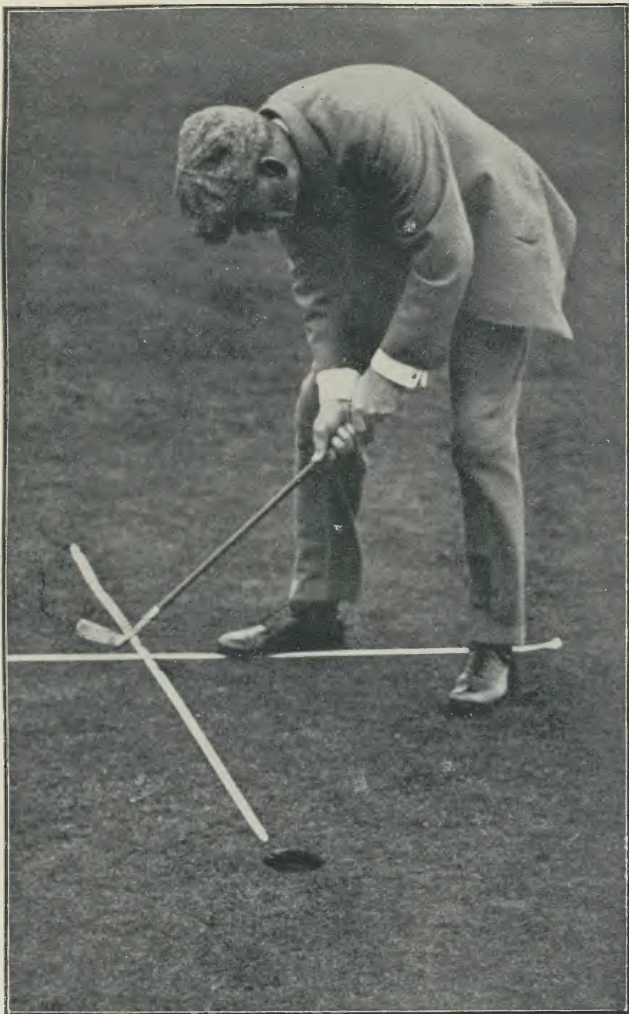
To play a Downhill Putt (Side of Hill).

In playing a downhill side putt, the slice or the hook may be used, according to the position of the ball. If the hole is to the right of a straight downhill putt, the hook is used; and if it is to the left of a straight downhill putt, it is the slice which is employed.

Cupped Lies.

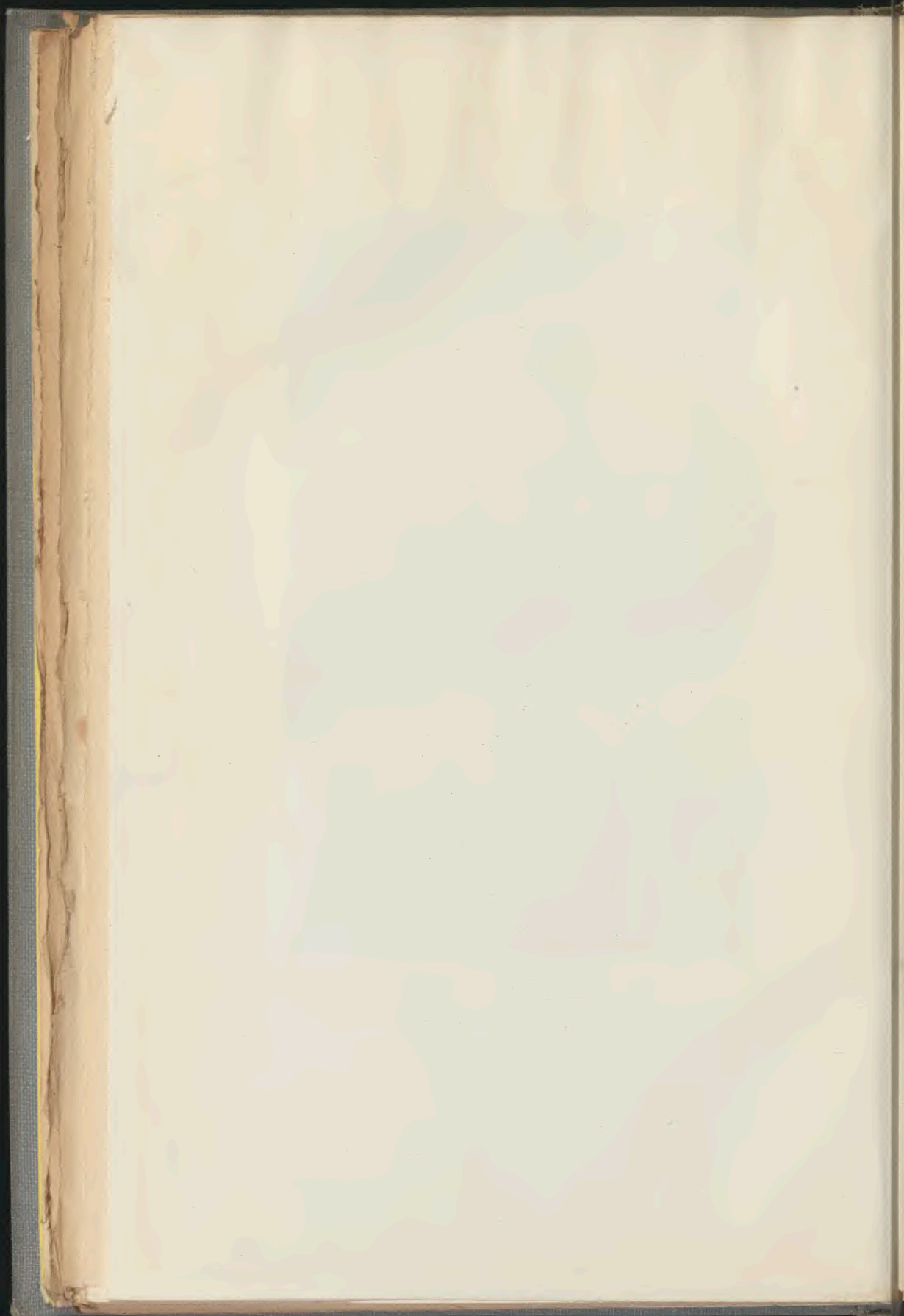
WHEN the ball is lying cupped on the green, stand with the left foot in a line with the ball, and hold the shaft of the club back so as to put the club in such a position that the loft will have effect. Do not try to loft the ball; the club has been chosen for the purpose, and will lift the ball out of the hollow without making the ball jump off the direction to the hole.

When making the forward movement in hitting the ball, the club should be drawn upwards, and this upward movement continued in the follow-through, either for a long putt or a short putt. This upward stroke may be used whenever you wish to keep the ball close to the ground and prevent it from jumping.



Hook—The Finish of the Stroke.

I have come across the ball. It will be noticed that the distance I have taken the club back and through correspond with the distances in a short putt.



About Practice.

No matter how much a player may know about how to putt, his knowledge will be of little practical use to him unless he practises. Some people have referred to putting as an inspiration, as something which comes and goes and cannot be controlled. The truth of the matter is that putting depends to a large extent upon practice, and if a player has been practising regularly he will be able to putt well, not one day, but every day; not on one occasion, but on every occasion. It is only through practice that the player can get his hand to do what his eye wishes. Confidence is a great essential to putting, and confidence can always be got by practice. When once the player acquires "touch" in putting, it requires very little practice to retain it. A fast green is the best green to practice on. It is more difficult to get the correct distances

on a fast green than on a slow one, and a fast green, therefore, makes the player's touch more delicate. Practice on difficult greens will, of course, render putting on ordinary greens much easier.

When I was a boy I used to be in the habit of playing with other companions on one of the putting greens of Musselburgh links. Here we spent a large part of our spare moments putting for halfpennies. We usually played until darkness stopped us; and then, taking the key (needless to say without sanction) of my father's club-shop, we would adjourn to these premises to continue our sport on the red brick floors.

The holes were made by scooping out a slight hollow in the middle of the chosen bricks, and to overcome the darkness we hit upon the idea of placing a lighted halfpenny candle as flag staff at each hole.

This putting, besides being unique, was, as can be well imagined, also extremely difficult. Never in any match or practice have I had a putt which needed as much skill as those I played on that red brick floor.

Here the line was usually a crack in the bricks, and sometimes, but very seldom, we would get a hole in one stroke. Owing to the shallowness of the hole, a putt, even of two inches, required the finest of touch to propel the ball into the hole, and not through it and out on the other side. To this early practice, I am sure, I owe a great deal; and although I would not advise my readers to try practising over similar ground, I would certainly urge them to practice on ordinary greens.

Besides the benefits of confidence and touch derived from putting by becoming familiar with a certain green, you have a basis whereon to work.

At the time when I was playing matches, I used to practice on my private putting green. This green had six holes of various lengths, each hole being three and a half inches in diameter, and not the regulation four and a quarter inches. The difference in the size of the hole made putting into a regulation hole much easier, the hole having the appearance of a wash-tub in size, after my practice at the small holes.

In time I came to know the exact amount of force required to hole a putt of any length when playing on this green. Taking this as my standard, whenever I played over a strange course I compared the strength of the green with that of my own at home, and hit the ball accordingly. This, I found, made putting much more simple and sure.

Before playing a game of golf, if there is a green convenient, make a point first to play a few putts of about two or three feet in length. When you come to play similar putts throughout the round, you will realise the benefit derived from your practice, short though it may have been.

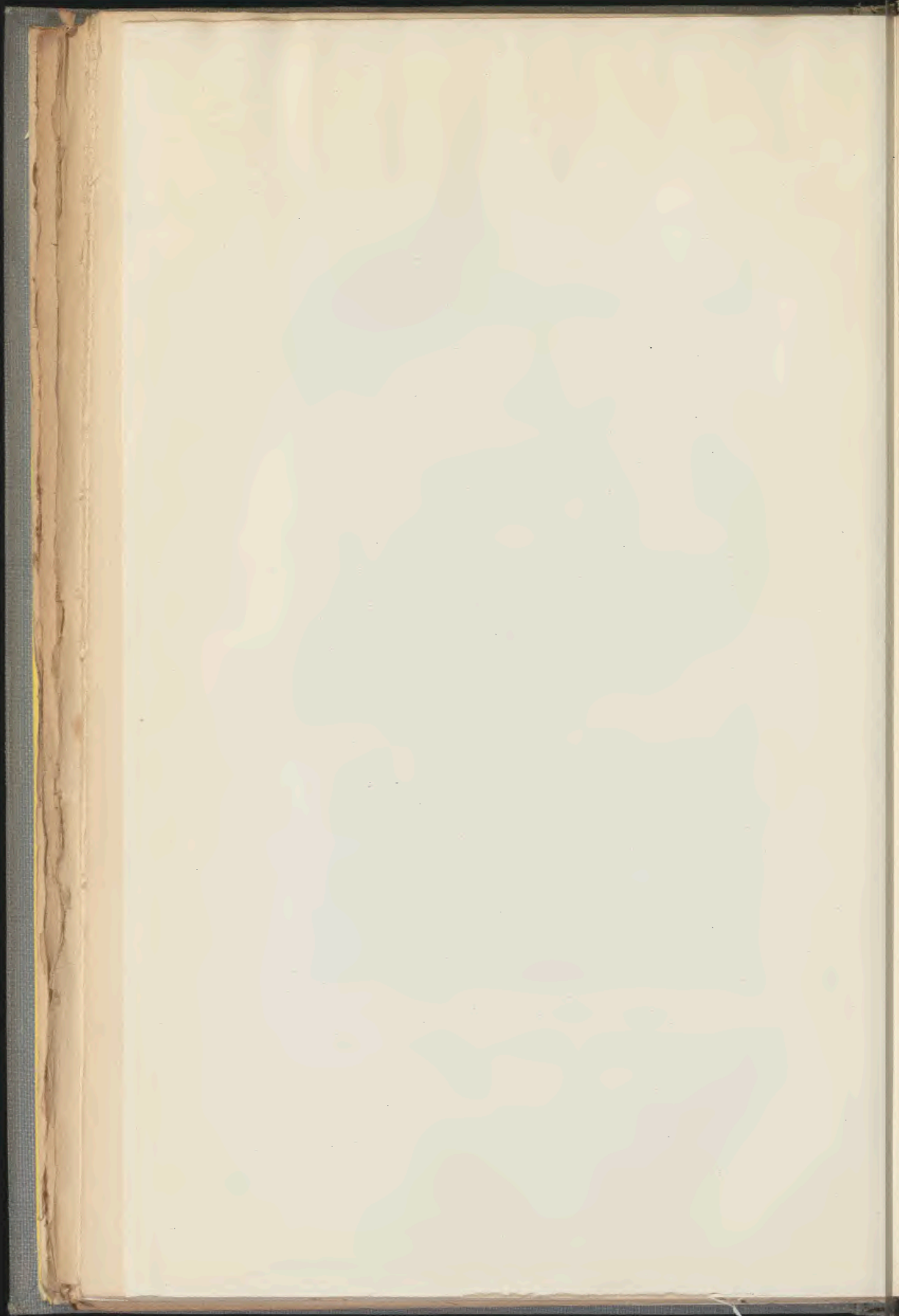
Another point to notice, is always to hole out the ball with care, even if it is only a few inches from the hole.

If the player is playing in any important match, he should take care not to do any hard work with the arms beforehand, such as using dumb-bells, etc.; even the carrying of a bag before play may spoil the touch, and make even a good player miss very short putts.



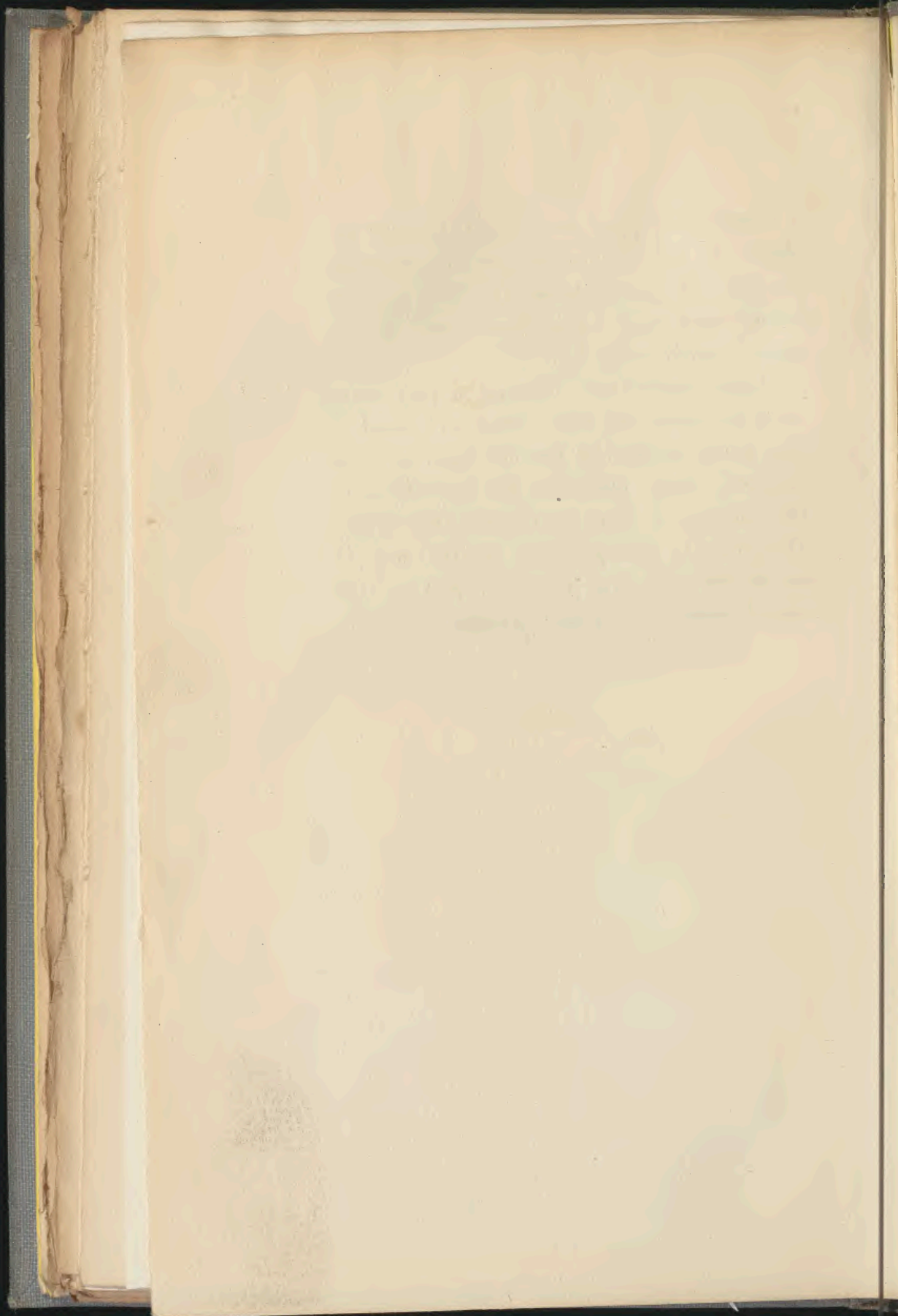
Hook—The Backward Stroke.

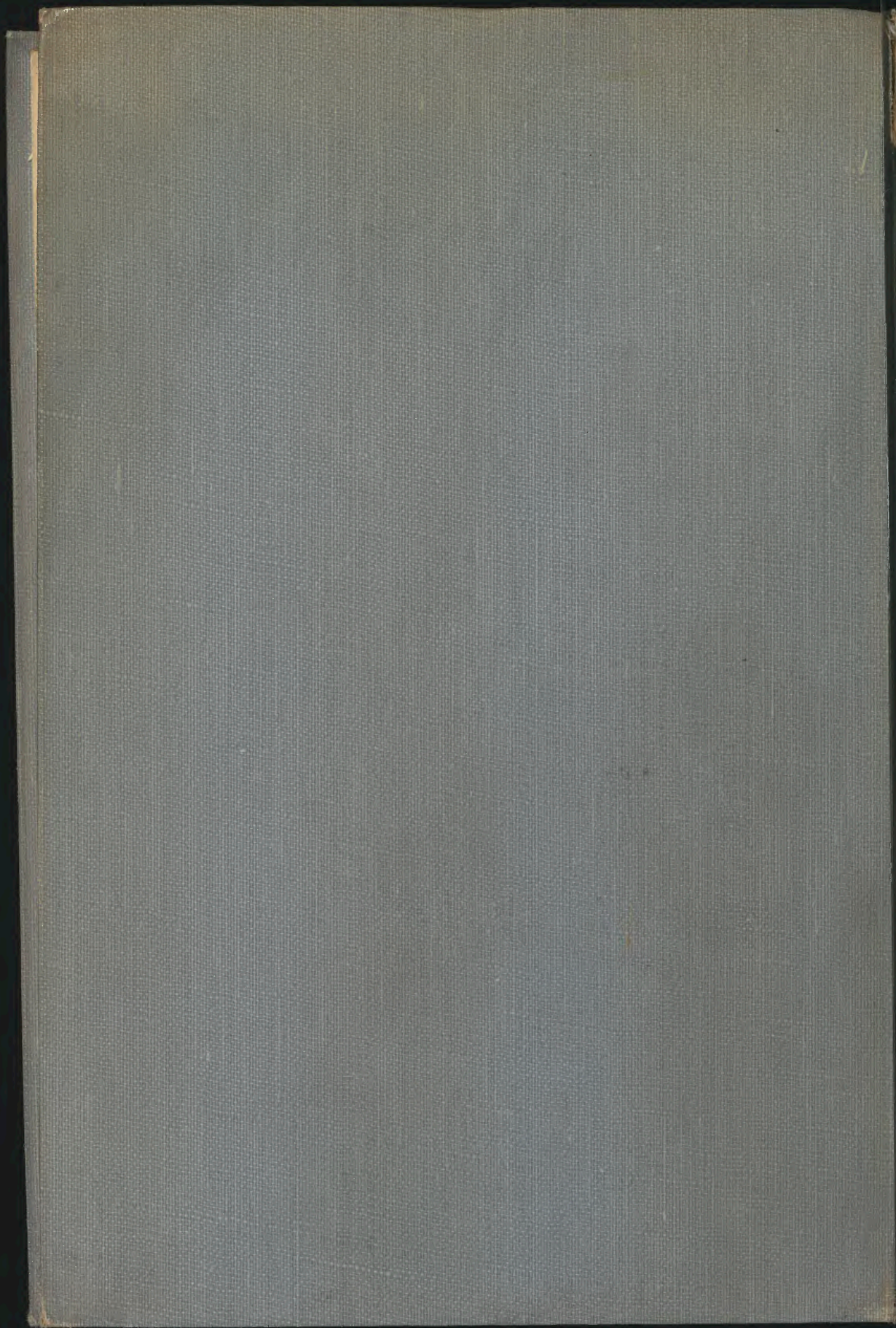
This is another picture to show how I bring my club back to play the hook.



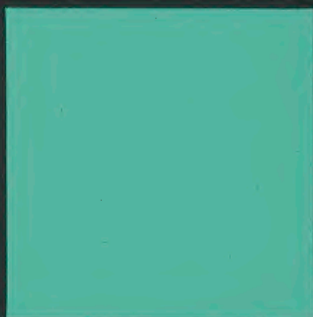
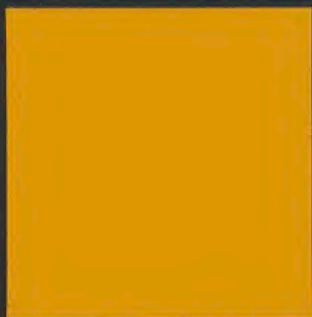
Many short putts are missed, because the player is not accustomed to the stooping position. A player should, therefore, practise holing short putts for at least three minutes before straightening up.

Many players, after missing a putt, have tried the same one over again and holed it. The reason is that, in the first case, an error has been made either in the line taken or the amount of force put into the stroke. The error is clearly shown by the way in which the ball first travelled, and at the second attempt the player rectifies this fault.





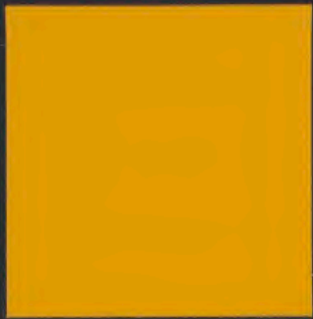
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