

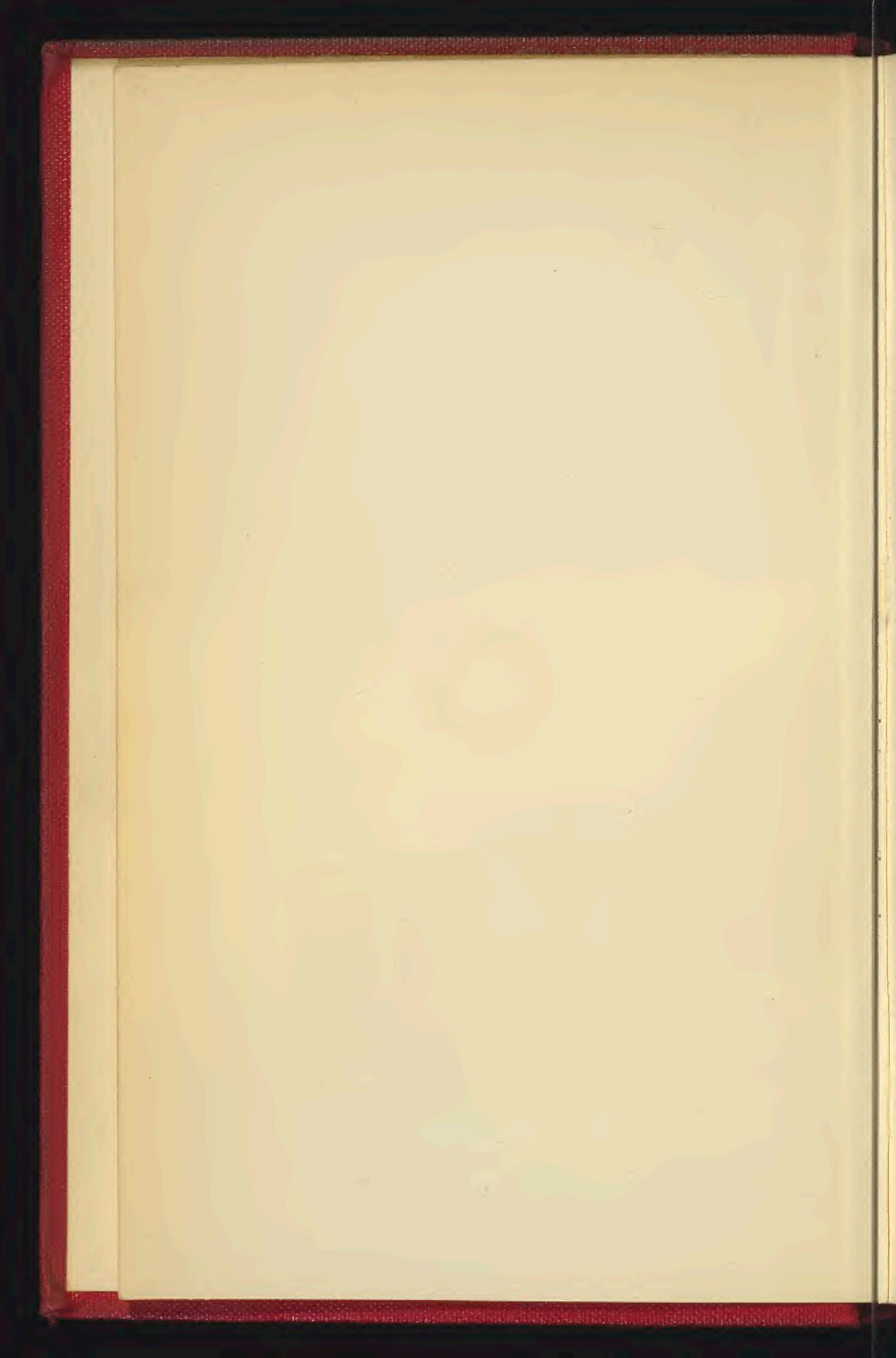
INLAND GOLF

BY EDWARD RAY

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INLAND

GOLF



The Art of Golf

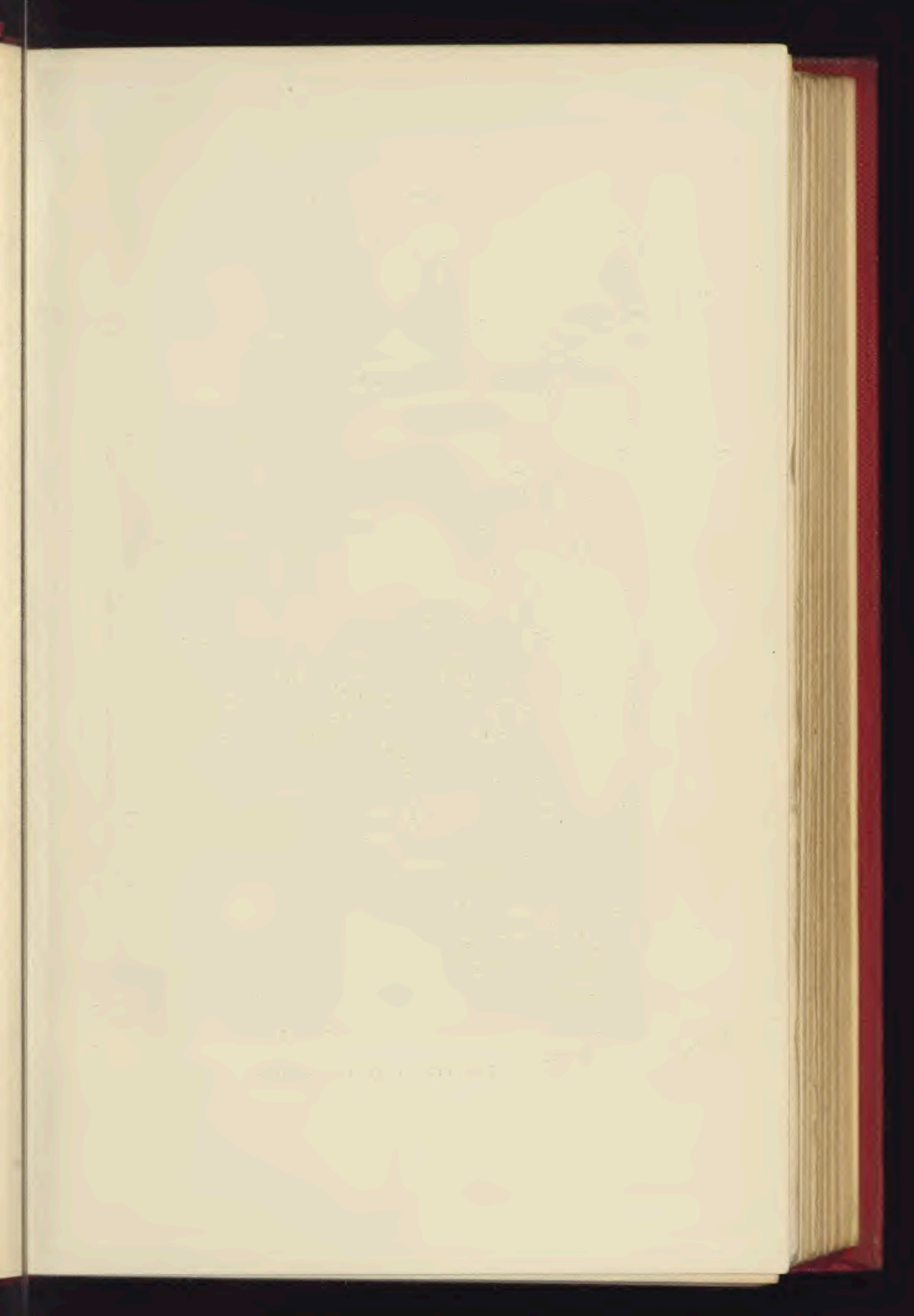
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THE FINISH OF THE DRIVE.

INLAND GOLF

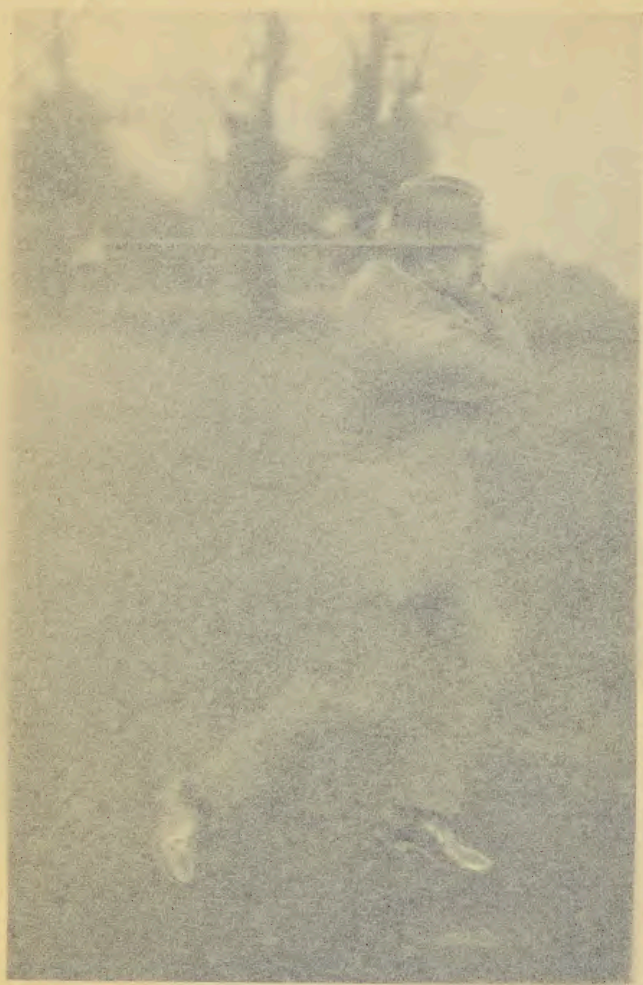
BY
EDWARD RAY

OPEN CHAMPION, 1912.

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THE FINISH OF THE DRIVE.

+

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PREFACE

GOLF differs from all meaner games in its infinite adaptability. It can be played over any sort of country and by any kind of player. And naturally, a game that has been played by the members of a Polar expedition among the ice and snow of the Antarctic and for which there are several courses in the Equatorial heart of Africa—a game whose Amateur Championship has been won within three years of one another by a grandfather of fifty-three and a student of twenty—a game in which the sexes can compete on such not wholly unequal terms that the exact handicap which the best of the lady players ought to receive from the best of the gentlemen is a matter of hot dispute—must be a game that admits of an endless variety of methods of play. It would not be expected therefore that, even among the best golfers, there should be any complete agreement as to the way in which its various strokes should be played; and, equally, it would be quite out of the question for any one player to try to lay down the law regarding the best style. For that reason I want to make it clear that, in setting forth my own methods of play in this book of mine, I am very far from wishing to insist that my way is always the best way. There are very few strokes in golf for which there is not more than one best way.

As a matter of fact, I should be the last man in the world to insist too strongly upon my own methods, for I am well aware that I am looked upon as the least orthodox of all the professionals who have held the Open Championship, and I must admit that, other things being equal, the unorthodox style is not usually the style for the beginner to copy. But, on the other hand, I would suggest that for the player who has already a style of his own, which he has based more or less upon the orthodox model, and perhaps not found wholly successful, a little study of methods of play which are formed upon different lines, is likely to be very illuminating. And there are one or two of my methods of play which are most at variance with those of my brother professionals, a description of which I nevertheless hope will be both useful and instructive to the average golfer, even although he should not adopt them.

Let me just mention two instances. Rightly or wrongly, I consider that I can just about hold my own with any player that I have seen in the matter of length from the tee. I think that I owe such honours as I have gained to that power of long driving and to my success in playing my approaches from all sorts of lies, good, bad and indifferent. Yet in both of these things my manner of play is altogether unorthodox. For I sway my body when I am driving—a thing which is anathema in the eyes of all other teachers of the game, but which I consider can be made a source

of a considerable addition of power in the stroke. And I play all my pitches with my niblick—a club which the generality, even of professional players, prefer to reserve for more heroic uses. In both of these directions I believe that my unorthodox methods have had a great deal to do with my success; and although I should not for a moment suggest that every player should imitate me in them, I do think that there are many who would find in my methods or in some modification of them, the means of a considerable improvement in their game. That hope is one of my reasons for writing this book.

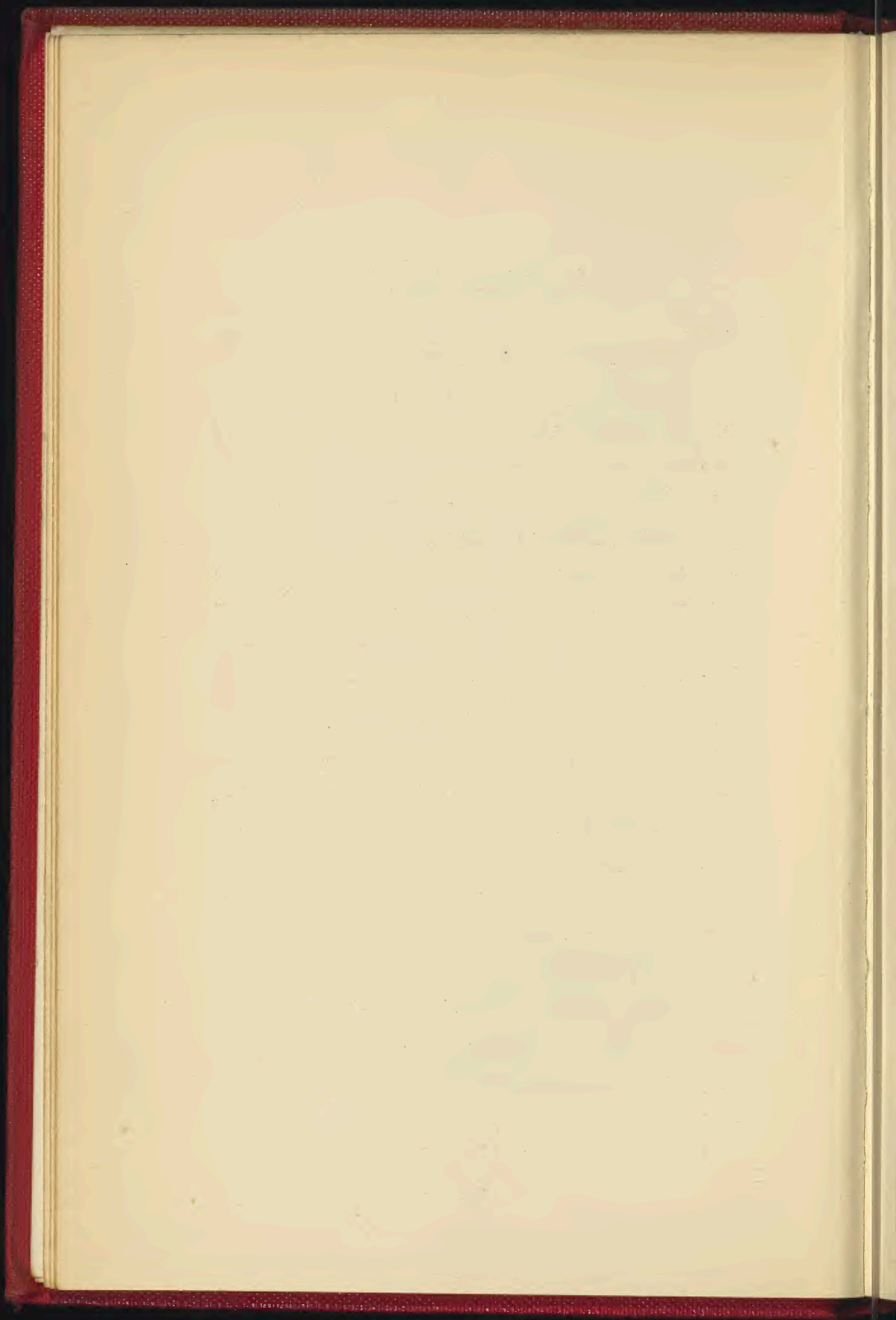
My other reason for temporarily turning my niblick into a pen is this: During the last twenty years the golf that is played on the inland courses of the cities has become the most important part of the game. The character of the courses themselves has improved out of all recognition, and the number of inland clubs and players has increased to such an extent that they form ninety per cent. of the world of golf to-day. Yet, in spite of this, almost everything that has been written in the way of instruction upon the game and play of golf concerns itself chiefly with the needs and the methods of the classical golf which is played on a seaside links. Although the difference between seaside and inland golf as regards the methods of play they call for, is everywhere recognised, the inland player is completely passed over, or at the best has to be content with a few

hints as to the way in which certain strokes may be modified to suit his particular case. I think there is room for a book which will discuss the whole game from the point of view of the inland players, who are after all, as I have said, the great majority. And it is in the hope of at least to some extent making good this omission that I have now allowed myself to be tempted from the straight and narrow fairway of golf into the rough of authorship.

I must not forget to acknowledge my indebtedness to the proprietors of *Golfing*, in whose pages considerable portions of this book first appeared in a somewhat different form, for their courtesy in giving me permission to reproduce these portions here. I also wish to thank Mr. Robert H.-K. Browning, the Editor of *Golfing*, for the help he has given me in arranging my published articles and manuscript into a shape suitable for appearing in book form. To my good friend Harry Fulford, to whom from time to time I have shewn the greater part of what is here written, I am indebted for some very helpful comment and criticism—mostly, I confess, of an adverse nature. My description of one shot, more unorthodox than the rest, drew from him the observation: "Well, old man, I know it's how you do it, and I can see why you do it; but Heaven help the man who tries to imitate you!" And with this solemn word of warning (though I have too much faith in my own methods to wish you to heed it) I present to you the book of "Inland Golf."

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INLAND GOLF

CHAPTER I

THE RISE OF INLAND GOLF

THE golf that is played on inland turf has long been regarded as a pale reflection of the real thing ; and the city player who knows not St. Andrews or Sandwich has been taught by his more fortunate brethren to regard seaside golf as a glorious game compared to which his own pitiful slogging over fine old park turf is but " as sunlight unto moonlight, as water unto wine." It is only of late that the inland player has begun to waken up and wonder whether there is just so much truth in this as he has been led to believe. To be sure the difference between the turf of the " links " and the turf of the " course " is sufficiently great to make a considerable difference in the method of playing almost every individual stroke, but the game as a whole is nowise altered. And the city golfer has good ground for arguing that inland golf is no whit inferior to the seaside game, even as it is no less " royal " and " ancient."

The beginning of Inland Golf may fairly be

dated as far back as 1603, in which year James VI. and I., of honoured memory, took the southward road that so many greater golfers than he have followed since, and founded the club that afterwards came to be known as the Royal Blackheath. Doubtless golf on inland courses had been known in Scotland long before that time ; for instance, in those " fields beside Seton," over which Mary Queen of Scots is said to have played. But in Scotland the recognised centres of the game were the sand-dunes by the sea shore, such as those of Leith, St. Andrews, Dornoch and Montrose. And it is rather remarkable that it was only when the Union of the Crowns introduced the game to England that inland golf began to come into its own. As a matter of fact, the history of the development of the game in England and the history of inland golf are practically one.

For all the royal favour bestowed upon it at its beginning, the game made slow progress in the cities ; and it was more than two centuries after the founding of the Royal Blackheath, before the second English club came into being. This was the Manchester Club, formed by a few enthusiasts who played over Kersal Moor in 1818. At that date, it would seem, the only Scottish clubs playing over city courses were the Glasgow Club, founded in 1787, and the two famous Edinburgh Clubs which played on the Bruntsfield links. It was not, however, till about 1890 that

the great golf boom suddenly and without warning overwhelmed England, and on both sides of the Tweed courses began to spring up in every town.

The result is that during these last twenty years or so there has been a great shifting of the centre of gravity of the golfing body politic. Like a middle-aged man that has grown fat and prosperous, it shows little change as to its head, but its body has swollen to almost unwieldy proportions. Those twenty years have seen the game spread over the whole of England, but the remarkable thing about the change is not the adoption by the Sassenach of a Scottish game—for that is a merely accidental feature of this great development—but the adaptation to inland uses of a game that once was only played beside the sea. Already London is, in point of the number of its courses and its players, by far the most important golfing centre in the world, and these numbers are growing all the time. And the same kind of thing is going on, in a proportionate degree, in Glasgow, Birmingham, Manchester and the other great inland cities.

To this change, little short of revolutionary in character, two great causes have contributed. The first is the mighty advance that has been made in the science of course construction and green-keeping, and the discovery of how good a course can be carved out of the most unfavourable country, provided expense is no object. The

other is the no less remarkable development of the rubber-cored ball, whose liveliness and whose tendency to rise quickly off the face of the club, have made it possible to find complete pleasure in playing over turf on which, in the days of the more heavy "gutta," no golf would have been possible.

Let me cite but two instances of the progress that has been made in the matter of course construction. One is Swinley Forest, where, in something like eighteen months, ground that had been covered with serried ranks of trees, was converted into a golf course of a very high class. The other is Mid-Surrey, at which, in the space of two years, £2,400 was spent in the construction of the now famous grass mounds and hollows, designed to remove the flatness and monotony which were the course's only reproach. Twenty years before, the club which laid out the twentieth part of that sum upon alterations in the course in a single year would have been deemed recklessly extravagant. But the golfer has discovered that even on an inland course he can add enormously to the interest of his game if he only cares to spend a sufficient amount of money. And he is always willing to spend.

Abroad, the rise of inland golf has been even more obvious. The mighty distances of the American continent make seaside golf an absolute impossibility, and I am told that as a matter of fact, of the thousand courses of the United States,

only one—the National Links at Long Island—is in the true sense a seaside course. On the Continent also—as, for instance, at Monte Carlo, where a course that is said to be the costliest in the world has been built over what was once little more than bare rock at an expense of over £45,000—the same thing is going on. It is inland golf, not seaside golf, which is capturing the world.

At the present moment nine courses out of ten and nineteen golfers out of twenty are devoted to the inland variety of the game, and the trend of events is all in favour of adding to the big battalions. Municipal golf, for instance, is only in its infancy. In spite of such remarkable examples as H. H. Barker and Abe Mitchell, the artisan player has not yet attained much prominence in big events outside of Scotland. But that is not to say that he is unknown. Yorkshire is very strong in artisan players, the most famous of whom, since H. H. Barker went over to professionalism and the United States, is Mr. Charlie Hodgson, of Baildon, a past County Champion. Buxton and Nottingham also are great centres of artisan golf, and have produced quite a number of good players, some of whom have since become famous as professionals—notably Tom Williamson, who is now engaged at Hollinwell. At Westward Ho! too, the artisan club is generally able to put in the field a team strong enough to triumph over the Royal North Devon Club in the annual match, and that means a good deal.

It is very clear, therefore, that the time will not be long before the municipal courses which are already beginning to spring up all over England will enable the working-man to add his hundreds of thousands to the ranks of the inland golfers. The outstanding example of what can be accomplished in this direction is the city of Edinburgh. with its six municipal courses and golf at the rate of twopence and threepence a round. On the Braids alone the number of rounds played during 1912 was 108,706. What figures would we arrive at if municipal golf were played in all our cities on a proportionate scale ?

I think I have said enough to show that inland golf has developed far beyond the stage when it could be dismissed as a mere imitation of the real thing, tolerated only because no other kind of golf is possible in the cities where merchants most do congregate. Let it be granted that golf on seaside links is as a rule a *pleasanter* game than it is on inland courses. Is there any reason whatever for speaking and thinking of seaside golf as a superior game requiring a nobler order of golfer to play it with success ? To say that every fool knows that it is easier to play well on seaside turf than on inland turf is no answer, and may be placed on a par with the remark of the old lady who, when the train comes to an unexpected stop, blandly informs an irritated compartment that she expects the signal is against them. Of course it is easier to play on seaside

turf—that is to say the ball runs farther, the iron clubs get better down to it, and so forth. But is this not simply another way of saying that inland golf is a more difficult game than seaside golf? Naturally the more perfect conditions produce more perfect play; but is there not something just a little contemptible in the assumption that the game that is played under the more favourable conditions must necessarily be, in any true sense of the words, the better game?

I fancy that the true explanation why inland golf is so much despised lies in the fact that in early days the inland course was sadly the inferior of the seaside one as a test of the game. It must be remembered that the artificial hazard is a comparatively modern invention; the scientific artificial hazard, which is often far more deadly than the most fearsome of natural bunkers, is a very modern invention indeed. Now, as long as hazards were only those which nature provided, it is scarcely to be wondered at if the hedges and trees of the inland course were counted puerile tests of skill beside such hazards as the great Cape Bunker or the Alps. But the nine-hole “sporting” inland course—of the kind which used to make sorely tried professionals returning from an exhibition match comfort one another with the knowledge that “it might have been worse; there might have been eighteen holes of it”—is no longer typical of inland golf. Yet the tradition of the inferiority of the inland game

still survives, although we have changed our walls and trees for grass mounds and sand, and made the best of the inland courses almost as difficult as St. Andrews or Hoylake.

In fact, there are some respects in which the boot is on the other leg. Undoubtedly the player on an average inland course has—at any rate through the green—to overcome a more formidable array of natural forces at each stroke than he has on an average seaside course. The more honour to him if he succeeds. And if, in the course of perfecting himself in the inland game, he for ever sacrifices some part of the prowess that might have been his on the courses by the sea, does that make him any the worse a golfer, or prove anything else but that there are two distinct kinds of golf, merging into one another no doubt, and not to be separated by any definite line of demarcation, but for all that each possessing characteristics of its own which are everywhere recognised?

The difference is sufficiently noticeable even in the records of the players. Braid, Taylor, and Vardon, and other giants of the game, have doubtless been taught by long experience to be equally at home on any sort of course, though even the triumvirate—coast-bred golfers all—seem to me to show to greater advantage on sea-side courses. But there is no lack of more convincing instances ready to hand. On the one side, I need only mention Laurence Ayton, the young St. Andrews

amateur who became professional to the Bishop Stortford Club, and whose success in his first three Open Championships—in which he was fourth, ninth and fifth—has been quite disproportionate to anything he has done in the big inland tournaments. On the other side there is J. G. Sherlock, an inland golfer born and bred, whose Championship record, good as it is, compares but feebly with his performances in the leading professional events held in the Midlands and London. There is not a doubt of it : inland golf and sea-side golf are two different games, and every golfer shows best in whichever of the two he was bred to.

It think that this is one great reason why London and other centres of inland golf have produced so few great amateur players. The recognised tests of amateur prowess are the Amateur Championship, and in a lesser degree the Irish Open—events both played over a definite rota of sea-side courses. If the inland golfers fail, it is not simply because the sea-side links are the more severe tests of the game, and so the more surely weed out the weaker brothers. It is also in part because for the greater portion of their golfing lives they play a different fashion of game altogether from that known to St. Andrews and Westward Ho ! What a queer upheaval of golfing reputations there would be if the Championship rota were altered, say, to Barnton, Sunningdale, Killermont, Hollinwell and Walton Heath !

I think there is something just a little unfair in

the way in which golfers who play over seaside links assume that their form of the game is the only true test, and they therefore the best players. For it is not as if the average sea-bred player did even proportionately well when he in his turn tries for the moment to play the other's game. My observation is that the inland golfer plays a great deal better on a seaside course than the seaside golfer does when the positions are reversed. But perhaps that may fairly be set down to the credit of the unaccustomed exhilaration due to the sea air and the open links, and even more to the fact that the inland player who is temporarily enjoying the pleasures of sea-side golf is usually on holiday bent. A mind free from the cares of business does more to make the city golfer play at the top of his game than anything else could do.

However, I am not concerned so much with the relative merits of the players of the inland and sea-side schools, as with the difference between the styles of golf best suited to the two distinct kinds of course upon which they play. In the chapters which follow, my chief endeavour has been to describe the method of playing every shot from the point of view of inland golf, so as to enable the player on city courses to build up from the very beginning a style adapted in every way to the demands of the inland game.

CHAPTER II

IMITATION

THE imitation of good players is the beginning of golf. If any man is inclined to dispute the fact that a novice can acquire a good style merely by observing others, I would refer him to one great class of golfers who are entirely self-taught. The professionals, almost to a man, learned their game in no other way. As caddies they observed and acquired the methods of some outstanding golfer in their own district, and the game thus learned they improved as opportunity offered of studying other first-class players. The reason why a caddie's swing always seems so good is because he tries to imitate the best player in the club which is honoured with his services. (He can also imitate the worst, with fiendish accuracy.) Thus, one good player in a club always becomes as it were a surety for more.

The bulk of the Westward Ho! professionals undoubtedly fashioned their game on that of J. H. Taylor who, if not exactly the first Westward Ho! youth to go forth, was certainly the most famous, and whose success, therefore, induced those remaining to imitate his methods. Neither can it

be altogether a coincidence that the bulk of the St. Andrews players swing alike. The influence of a well-known professional is often seen in the methods employed by the members of his club ; they may have their own mannerisms, but the groundwork is based on their study of him.

Especially to golfers just commencing the game I recommend a careful study of those whose style and play are admitted to be good. And even in the case of a player of several years standing, although it would be foolishness on my part to say that he can change his whole style of play, yet now and again he can take a leaf from another's book, and by watching first-class players discover some hitherto undreamed of improvement to fit into his own game. Even a professional may have something to learn. I know one who, without being well known, is nevertheless a good player ; this man flattered himself that he had nothing to learn regarding the mashie, and that he could play the club with the best. But he suddenly awoke to the fact that he obtained too much run on the ball, and this puzzled him until one day when he happened to play a match against one of the leading players. Watching his opponent carefully, he discovered that he pulled the club well through with his left hand. He sought information, proceeded to imitate his more famous opponent, and soon had reason to feel grateful for this chance discovery. The remedy would

probably never have dawned upon him but for this opportunity.

If I have convinced you, then, of the benefits to be derived from judicious imitation of others, let me add a word or two regarding the way you ought to set about it. Your purpose is to mark, learn, and inwardly digest, and it is at the very outset of your task that you are most likely to go wrong. For, to begin with, you must *observe*, and that for most men means a greater effort than they are quite aware of. But if he cares to take it, no golfer has more opportunity of observing first-class players than the golfers of the metropolitan courses, within whose sphere of influence all that is best in professional golf has been gathered together and the season is one long round of tournaments and exhibition matches.

An exhibition match, in its original purpose, is neither an advertisement nor an entertainment but an education. To the observant golfer—but how few golfers are observant!—it ought to be the source of more than a little profit, for there is not one of the great players from whom he cannot learn something—the easy manner in which Vardon lifts his club, the firm stand invariably taken up by J. H. Taylor, or Duncan's nonchalant manner. But unfortunately a wide experience of exhibition games has convinced me that those functions are nearly always regarded by their promoters as a means of obtaining a vicarious sort of advertisement in the Press, and by the

spectators as something of the same order as a football cup-tie. The wise ones to whom such a meeting means an opportunity of learning many things worth knowing, are comparatively few and far between.

I have noticed that the same inability to make the most of an opportunity is exhibited by nine out of ten of the amateurs who take their professional out for a round. They make the mistake of merely observing the result of his play without caring much how he does it. But if without troubling about the result they would carefully watch the method employed, they would be much more likely to obtain an adequate return for their time and money.

Not only must you observe ; you must observe closely and minutely. I have seen many a bright young golfer exhibiting for the benefit of a friend a version of Vardon's swing which would make my good friend Harry green with emotion. These exponents of style simply endeavoured, if I may put it so, to copy the general contour of Vardon's swing without paying the slightest attention to the various component parts of which that swing is made up. But it is those component parts which make the swing, and, apart from them, no man, unless he be cross-eyed and play with one eye fixed on the ball and the other on a large mirror held in front of him, can tell what his swing is really like. On the other hand, if he takes care that all the details of the swing are

faithful copies of the methods of his original, he may rest assured that the *tout ensemble* is all that it should be.

I often think that it would be a good thing "could some power the giftie gie us to see ourselves as ithers see us" on the links. For there is nothing more natural, and at the same time there is nothing more fallacious than for a player to conceive that he has a fine, free, easy swing. If some golfers could only watch themselves driving for a hole or two, it might be the means, after the first shock and horror had passed away, of leading them to the correction of many imperfections.

Another piece of advice which I would give, is not quite so easy to follow. It is very desirable to distinguish between the features of a player's style which are essential and those which are merely incidental. Even the best of players may have certain little mannerisms of his own which are quite unnecessary to his play, but which, being unusual, are more often noticed than matters of more importance. How often have I seen a beginner adopting what he fondly imagines to be the style of some great player, when all that he has really learned is a few affectations of which the great man is himself scarcely conscious, and which hinder rather than help the success of the too-faithful imitator. In one respect especially, I think that the golfer with a little knowledge is apt to be betrayed into error, and

that is in the follow through and finish. The whole action is completed so quickly that the mind of the observer is apt to be unduly directed towards the position of club and hands at the finish of their movement. What I want you to notice is that there is often a very big difference between the finish of the movement of the club and the finish of the stroke proper. Because most players relax their tense attitude at the end of the swing either by continuing the stroke into some final flourish or by allowing elbows, hands, and club to drop down into some more easy position. This final movement has nothing to do with the stroke, being, in fact, only a means of relieving the tense muscles; but because it seems to be part of the swing the careless observer is apt to endow it with an altogether fictitious importance. The photographer, too, is often a source of error in this respect. He naturally prefers to pull the trigger of his deadly weapon at an instant when the player is nearly motionless, and therefore the favourite position for the "snap" of the unhappy golfer is "at the finish of the swing." But, for the reason which I have already explained, what he gets is not the finish of the swing, but the finish of the relaxed motion which follows it, which may be anything. And the golfer who endeavours to play his own stroke in such a manner as to finish in the attitude of the photograph is asking for trouble all the way.

I would like to say that if you are already a

player of two or three years' standing, with a more or less settled style of your own, you will do no small amount of good to your game if you will direct your attention especially to the points in which the style of the great man whom you are watching differs from your own, considering whether in any of these details your own methods are susceptible of reform, and endeavouring to graft the new ideas upon the old. One thing it is practically impossible to do, and that is to drop your own style and adopt the style of someone else. I have known many players who, conscious that their play was very far removed indeed from the ideal, have dreamed dreams about starting the game all over again from the beginning with a style based upon that of one or other of the heroes of the game. Occasionally they build their hopes upon the fact that a complete rest from golf throughout the winter has given them time to forget their old style, and, what is more important, their old faults. Alas ! the Ethiopian cannot change his skin nor the leopard his spots, even on the golf course, and a man's style is not to be put on and off as a garment. Nor would it be altogether a blessing if it could, for the methods of even the veriest duffer that ever had to replace the turf are bound through time to embody much that is better suited to his own build and his own powers than the methods of any other player, however great. No ! If the player of several seasons standing is going to

alter his style, it must be by a process of assimilation, adapting the new methods to fit into the general scheme of the old game.

It is chiefly with the hope of helping the older players that, in the chapters which follow, I have not only endeavoured to set down such general hints regarding the methods of play best suited to inland courses as I consider most likely to be useful to the beginner, but have also explained in detail my own methods with regard to many points in which my play differs from that of my brother professionals. In a game where so many different styles and theories are all, in different hands, apparently so successful, it would ill become so unorthodox a player as myself to dogmatise about my own theories. I am not asking any player to imitate me in all or any of them, but I have set them down at some length in the hope that, in one direction or another, their very unorthodoxy may open up to some of my readers new ideas which a little experiment may convert into improved methods.

CHAPTER III

THE CHOICE OF CLUBS

THE workman is known by his tools and the golfer by his clubs. When I was a boy, carrying clubs with others in my native isle of Jersey, there was never a stranger came to the course but his set was subjected to a minute examination at the earliest opportunity. And I am only stating a fact when I say that we caddies could generally guess at a visitor's handicap to within a couple of strokes by the mere appearance of his clubs. Many indications assisted us in our diagnosis. For instance, a driver-head that has a few well-defined ball-marks on its neck and on the toe can only belong to a player whose handicap is well over twenty ; and, on the other hand, when the wooden clubs show a blurred impression in the centre of the face, their owner is no chicken ; while heads whose varnish resembles that of an old violin and clubs whose shafts possess a dull gloss, betray the player of many years' standing. Perhaps it is hardly necessary to add that all these signs were not sought out so diligently without an ulterior motive, and that the clubs with ball-marks on the neck were given a wide

berth, while the player whose set was free from every indication of golfing sin could command the allegiance of the whole caddie-shed.

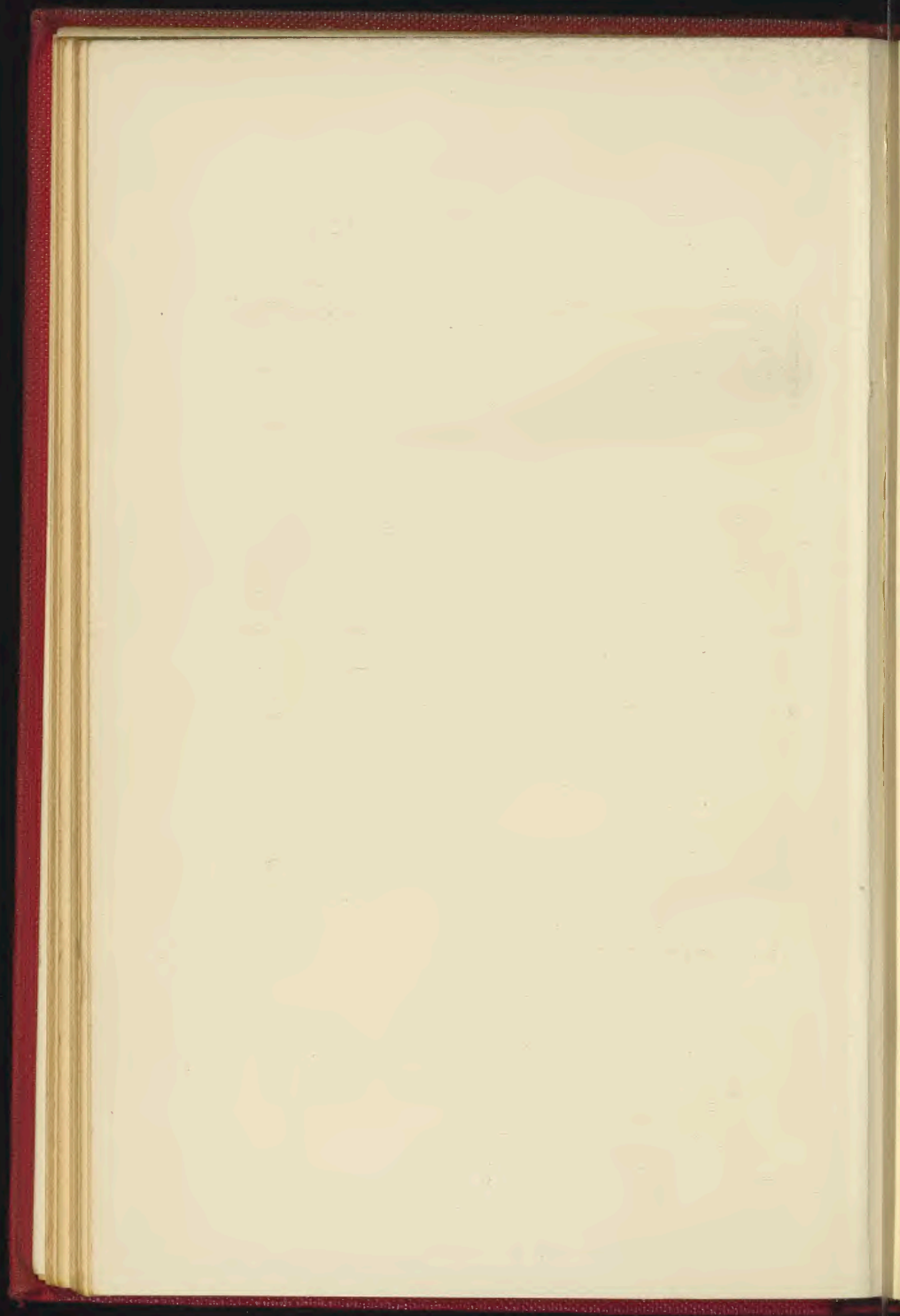
So much for the *condition* of a player's clubs as an index of his skill and standing. The *character* of them is no less significant, for a judicious selection of the weapons employed is the first requirement of a good player. I do not anticipate that every golfer who reads my book will be a seasoned player, and it is chiefly to the brave spirits who are on the eve of taking up the game that I should like to offer a little advice on the selection of their weapons. At the same time, my remarks may interest even those who are long past their novitiate, and may serve as a guide to them when they next examine their sets in order to discover in what respect the iron or cleek that they have suspected for some time falls short of the standard.

For the beginner seven clubs at least are required. To place them in their correct order these are: a driver, a brassy, a cleek, an iron, a mashie, a niblick, and a putter. To begin with, the player need not concern himself with baffies, driving-mashies, approaching-cleeks, or mashie-irons, though these may take their place in the bag in due season, when he has mastered the intricacies of the game, and awakens to the fact that there is a void between his iron and his mashie, or between his brassy and his cleek. For my own part, I generally carry thirteen clubs



MY BAG.

1-4, drivers ; 5, cleek ; 6, driving-iron ; 7, iron ; 8, mashie ; 9, niblick ;
and 10, putter.



when playing in tournaments, but very rarely do I use them all. My experience is that if a player has two clubs of about equal driving-power to select from, and tries to keep both in regular use, it is all Lombard Street to a China orange that the one he finally decides upon for any stroke is the wrong one. Let there be a proper set, therefore, to choose from, and leave the extras to do the odd jobs that are constantly cropping up in the course of a round.

The selection of the two wooden clubs is a matter that should not be hurried. You should allow the professional to set aside a few that experience suggests are likely to suit you. The slim man should eschew all heavy clubs, and the gentleman with adipose tissue has no use for a fairy wand. I have noticed also that the short person usually favours long clubs, and the man of many inches prefers them short. Of the selection that the professional's experience points out as suitable to your build and inches, there will be two or three which you will fancy more than the others. This "fancy" is everything in golf. No matter how good a club may be, if, on handling it, you do not get the feeling that you could use it, put it aside; it won't suit you. The shaft of the driver should not be too stiff, but is much better to possess a little "whippiness." This flexibility, however, must not run the entire length of the shaft, but should be confined to the part about nine inches above the point where it joins the head. It should

be a steel shaft ; that is to say, when the head is pressed hard on the ground so as to bend the shaft, it should at once regain its original straightness on being released. If it fails to do so and, instead, seems quite lifeless, it is no good. First-class shafts are getting scarcer every year, and a really good specimen is worth every penny charged for it.

The length and weight of the club must always be determined by the power of the man who wields it ; but for a person of ordinary proportions, 42 inches and 14 ozs. will be found quite suitable. Anything longer and heavier than this takes some wielding ; but if the player can make good play with a club of the weaver's beam pattern, there is no reason why he should not do so. The shape of a driver-head is almost entirely a matter of fancy, and the many shapes all possess certain recommendations—in the eyes of the makers. I have a great fancy myself for the steel-bolt type of driver which has a square of steel set into the hitting part of the face and kept in position by a steel bolt and a nut which is set into the back of the head and covered by the lead. I consider that in no other form of driver is the weight of the club-head concentrated so closely behind the ball.

The shaft of the brassy, without being rigid, should be on the stiff side ; indeed, for every club that has to come into frequent contact with the ground a stiff shaft is essential. The length should be that of the driver. The only important

point of difference which usually distinguishes the two wooden clubs is that the loft of the face of the brassy should be more pronounced than in the case of the driver, this making it easier to raise the ball from its usual lowly lie through the green—a matter in which the club is further assisted by the fact that the brass sole brings the centre of the weight of the club-head lower down the club-face.

But there is another important matter which the inland golfer would do well to observe. Given an ordinary depressed lie, the brassy with a flat sole presents a difficulty that no peculiarity of stance will remove, for it is obvious that, in meeting the ball, the heel and toe of the club must bite into the ground, which inevitably takes from the blow a certain amount of the force applied; the club is checked, and the stroke, however faultless the swing may have been, is deprived of its proper value. I have no hesitation in saying that the ideal brassy for inland players is that which possesses a sole rounded to such an extent that, on a level surface, it rests on no more than half an inch of its base. This type of club, it will at once be seen, is adaptable to any lie or peculiarity of a player's stance. The heel, being practically non-existent, is deprived of its turf-catching propensities, and if the lie be not too awful—the sort our opponents say they always get—the head of the club should have an uninterrupted passage.

The cleek is another club that has to perform similar duties to the brassy, and should also be

so constructed that it possesses a fighting chance against indifferent lies. "I can't take a brassy here; give me the cleek," is a very common observation on a golf course; but if the lie be too depressed for the brassy, it will be nearly as difficult for the cleek to get the ball away, assuming the cleek has a perfectly straight sole. I am inclined to the belief that the difficulties experienced by a lot of players in playing flat-soled clubs correctly is one of the reasons why the baffy is rapidly becoming a popular club, for the best types of the baffy are very much rounded at the sole. I would like to add that while the rounded sole is certainly more necessary in the case of the distance clubs like the brassy and the cleek, the same idea can be made use of with advantage both for the iron and for the mashie.

In the case of the iron clubs, the principle thing is to see that the shafts are stiff, but not of that dead stiffness that betrays the lifeless fibre. The cleek is the only iron club in which a little flexibility should be permitted; but even this must be slight. You must understand that the whole object of the stiff shaft is to prevent any "give" when the iron bites into the turf. If you take a divot of respectable size, and the shaft of the club employed is whippy, the stroke simply must be a failure, for the hands come through in the swing before the club-head instead of at the same time. The majority of professional golfers take a little turf for nearly every iron shot, because by doing

so they can be more certain of keeping the line. This seems rough on the course undoubtedly, but provided that the first unwritten rule of the game is observed, little harm is done. But it is a practice which would become quite impossible if they were to employ irons with shafts built on the same lines as those of their drivers. It is as well to point out, however, that stiff shafts will not suit everybody. The man with a slow half-swing, will find them a handicap, for a club with a little flexibility will assist him to obtain that flick at the moment of impact which counts for so much, whereas the objections to the whippy shaft do not apply when the swing is as deliberate as his.

The iron which the beginner ought to get is what I might describe as a mid-iron—the most ordinary type of all. The shaft must of course be stiff, for, like the mashie and niblick, it will be frequently used as an agricultural implement. The head should possess a fair amount of loft; but you ought to bear in mind that the more lotted the club, the less possibility is there of obtaining anything other than an ordinary straightforward stroke. You cannot play a low shot with the iron; at least the beginner should not attempt to do so. Later on, when a certain amount of confidence is gained, you will doubtless add a type of driving-iron to your caddie's burden, but in the early days you will do well to confine your endeavours to the ordinary iron shot. The iron will probably become your favourite

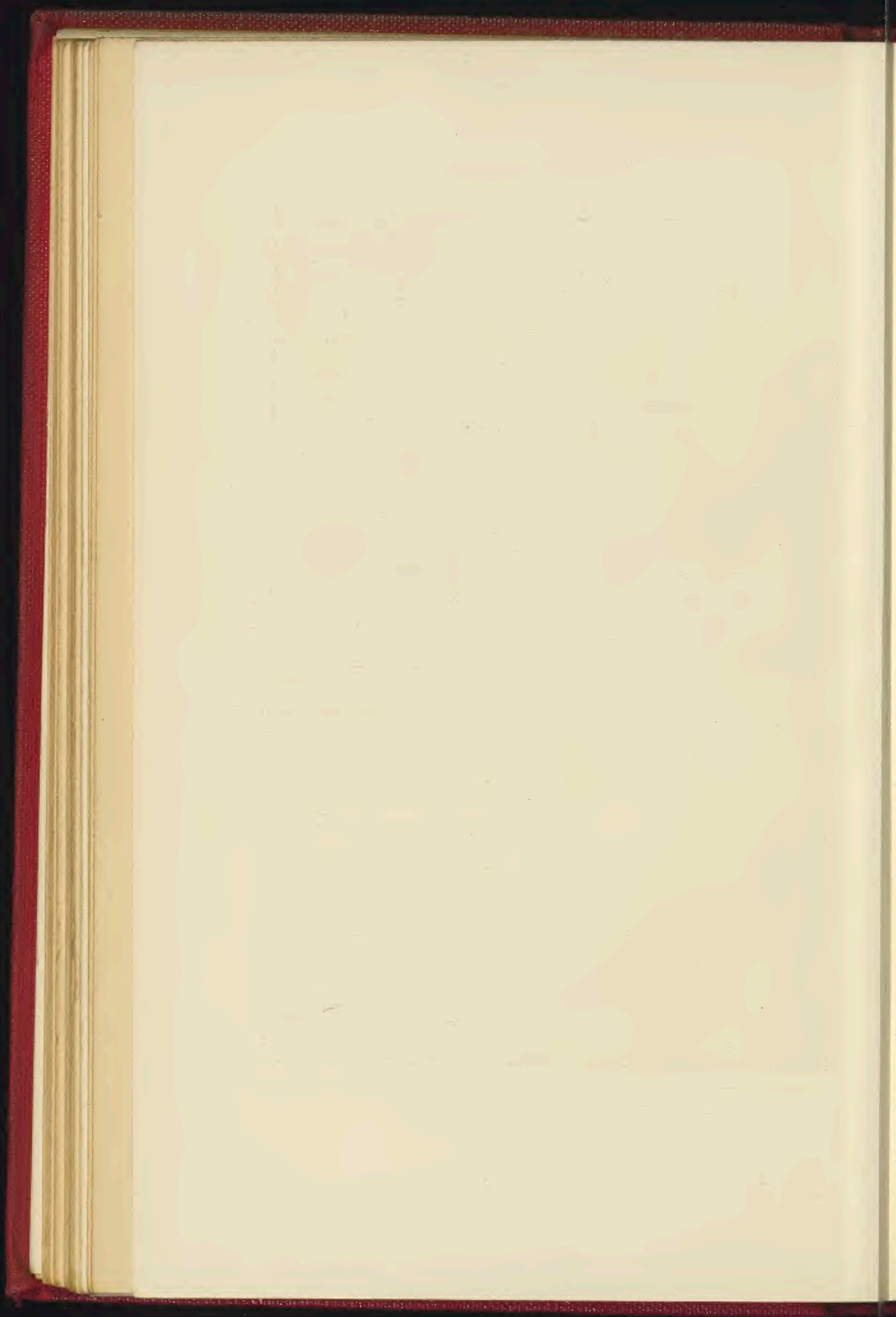
club, for the chief desire, as it is the chief difficulty, of all beginners is to raise the ball, and this the iron will enable you to do with greater ease than any other. There are many good types of blade, and you cannot go far wrong in your selection.

Next in order of power is the mashie—a club you will use for playing most of your short approaches, which, unless you are all the mightier a hitter, will mean for any distance up to, say, 120 yards. It is a forceful weapon, and when the ball lies cupped its rigidity and strength will stand you in good stead, for a piece of turf will have to be removed with the ball every time. Personally, I prefer a mashie with a deep face, as I think that for playing on inland courses any other type is useless. It is painfully easy when the ball is lying in long grass to pass the blade completely underneath the ball, which thereupon subsides gracefully into the pit you have unwillingly dug for it. But with a fairly deep blade the chances of such a catastrophe are greatly minimised. See, therefore, that you select one of this type, and turn a deaf ear to any friend who suggests a narrower blade, which is only suitable on a hard seaside course.

Enter now the niblick, the most versatile club in the bag. There is none of my clubs for which I have a more friendly feeling, but there is little that I can say in the way of special advice regarding the selection of it. I suggest, however,



THE NIBLICK SHOT IN SAND.



that you choose one with a good hitting face—something, in fact, like what is commonly known as a mashie-niblick. There is no good reason why you should handicap yourself with a niblick that has a small face, although you are informed by your friends the club is for the purpose of getting out of holes. You will more often take it to extricate yourself from bunkers or long grass, and as, in so using it, you are bound to swing violently, it is not easy to hit the ball with perfect accuracy—a difficulty which a short-headed type of niblick will greatly accentuate. Another reason why the long-headed type should be preferred is that it is an advantage to be able to take your niblick for approach shots, where it is fatal to obtain much run, and the niblick I suggest you purchase is far more reassuring than the small circular piece of metal that many players favour. See that the shaft is a sturdy one, and that the sole of the club is not too razor-like, otherwise the ball that is topped will prove to be the ball that is ruined, and in these two-and-sixpenny days that sort of thing is apt to become a well of pessimism. Get a club with the face well laid back, for you will often find yourself immediately behind the towering bank of a bunker. Of course you may some day find your ball in a spot from which not even the most lofted of niblicks will rescue you. In that case there is nothing to do except pick up and walk to the next tee in as dignified a manner as possible.

Never waste time and temper attempting to play the unplayable.

Last of all, I come to the root of all golfing evil—the putter. You must have one certainly, but the player never yet lived who passed five years of a golfing life without a new one. It does not come within the scope of this chapter to relate the many stories that are told of the searches and researches that golfers have undertaken to discover a putter that putts by itself, so to speak; but the beginner can make up his mind that the putter of to-day may not be the putter of next week. When the charm of the delicate swan-neck wears off, you will rave to your friends of the new putting-cleek you have purchased. A month later you will probably be offering this for sale in order to make room for an aluminium, and when you have brained a sniggering caddie with this, or hurled it into a pond, back you will go to the swan-neck, or else forth to the pro.'s shop in search of yet weirder types. Heaven only knows the number of types of putter on the market. A friend of mine, taking a survey of his own stock on one occasion, discovered that he was in possession of twenty-eight distinct shapes. While he was reflecting that he was prepared for all emergencies, a member entered his shop and asked his opinion of a putter that he had recently purchased elsewhere. And the pro. had never looked upon its like before.

Balance is everything in a putter, and you will

quickly discover a badly balanced club by the feel. A good stiff shaft is advisable, though I have known more than one player putt really well for a time with a putter whose shaft was like a whip. Do not get a light club ; on a wormy inland green it will be almost useless. However, it is a sheer waste of time and space to continue the subject of putters. Get what you fancy most. Whichever it is, you'll be wanting to exchange it in a month or so, for putting is a phase of the game in which it is only the man behind the club that counts, and that is why it has done more to destroy the pleasures of golf than any other.

This completes your requirements at the outset of your career of trouble, and I would certainly recommend you to master these before adding to their number. Afterwards, when you begin to feel perfectly at home with the stalwarts of the bag, one or more of the odd clubs, such as a baffy or driving-iron, may be added to the burden your caddie has to bear. As a matter of fact, we cannot fairly describe the driving-mashie, or iron, or mashie-iron, as odd, and perhaps I ought rather to have called them the clubs for odd strokes. Although we carry a goodly number of clubs in our bags, it is a mistake to ring the changes on them too much ; rather should we be faithful to those we look upon as our favourites, until some occasion which demands the employment of one of the extra ones.

In the set of an up-to-date golfer we see many

of these extra clubs. There arrives a time in the career of every golfer when he imagines that he lacks some club or other. There is too much of a gap, for instance, between the cleek and iron for the lowly handicapped, and he therefore likes to carry some club that is a cross betwixt the two clubs mentioned, even as I do myself. I cannot say that I use it frequently, but the driving-iron that I carry is a favourite nevertheless. It is like no other that I have seen. My cleek measures $39\frac{3}{4}$ inches and weighs 15 ozs., but this driving-iron only measures 37 inches—which, curiously enough, is the length also of my iron and mashie—and the weight of it is $15\frac{1}{4}$ ozs. It has a bevelled sole, and this I consider to be extremely useful, for, whatever the lie may be, this club will fit it. Now, I know that its weight is a trifle on the heavy side, but for this very reason I find it of great value when the ball is cupped, for with it I can cut boldly through the turf and at the same time rely on the heavy head to take me a good distance. The short shaft also makes the stroke easier and surer; it is, of course, dead stiff, otherwise it would be of little service.

In dealing with the odd strokes, I should perhaps have mentioned the baffy first. I have no fault to find with this club, though I do not carry one, but I have seen enough of its capabilities in the hands of Duncan and Herd to regard it with respect, and if any player finds that it takes the

place of his cleek I have no quarrel with him. The baffy stroke is no different from the cleek in regard to the distance obtained; and so far as getting a ball away from a grassy lie is concerned, I am prepared to admit that the advantage lies with the baffy, for the deeper face minimises the danger of getting too much underneath the ball. The club being usually a shade longer than the cleek, it follows that the player must adapt his stance accordingly. The swing is more round, and is similar to that used with a brassy. The chief virtue of the club lies, I think, in its rounded sole and well-laid-back face, for on inland greens these attributes are of great service. I do not think, however, that the baffy could ever supplant the cleek entirely, though those who favour it are undoubtedly becoming more numerous. Another substitute for the cleek is the club known as a wooden cleek. This is of recent birth, and is, in my opinion, much inferior to the baffy, whose pugnacious and business-like appearance always appeals to me. The wooden cleek has a narrow face, and those I have seen possess a flat sole, which is in itself, to my mind, a sufficient reason for having none of them. The driving-mashie and driving-iron are very little different from the cleek; but the former is better suited to a tight lie, the head being smaller and a shade deeper. This is quite a good club in its way, and with a lot of players takes the place of the cleek with success.

So far, all the odd clubs described have been substitutes for the poor much-abused cleek. It is a relief, therefore, to pass on to the mashie-iron, which takes the place of none, being used chiefly for a stroke against the wind, for what would be mashie-distance on a calm day. It is, as its name denotes, a cross between the iron and mashie. The head is the size of the mashie, but the loft is that of the iron. It is quite a good club for running-up shots, and against the wind quite excellent, for using it, the player has no need to alter his stance in order to reduce the loft, as he would have to do with his mashie.

It is played in the same manner as the mashie, but the trajectory obtained is lower, and this is the principle reason of its existence. It is also used for a cuppy lie and when distance is required, and for such a stroke the small head has a great advantage over the ordinary iron blade.

After that we arrive at a mashie-niblick, which, in my opinion, is a club that all players should carry in addition to the niblick proper. We are continually confronted with the necessity of pitching 80 yards or so over a bunker and on to a green where much run will be fatal! We have strayed from the correct path in our journey up to the green, and the hole is tucked away in a spot that favours our opponent who has gone straight, and who is already counting his chickens as he watches us gazing at what is to us an apparently inaccessible hole. We have no use for an ordinary

mashie under these circumstances, and the niblick proper is not powerful enough to enable us to get the distance, therefore the mashie-niblick comes as a boon and a blessing. We haul it forth and put our trust in the providence that watches over the unfortunate golfer who has wandered. Taken all round, I consider the mashie-niblick one of the most useful clubs a player can use, especially so on inland courses, where its broad face makes it a useful weapon when in rough grass, in which it would be easy to get too much under the ball.

The club I myself use as a niblick is really a mashie-niblick. It only differs from the niblick proper in the length of its head and in being just a shade less lofted, but that and the rounded sole make it the most useful club in my bag. No matter what the nature of the lie may be, I always feel that this club will do its duty.

In conclusion, let me again suggest that you look well after your clubs. A little linseed oil, and a coat of varnish occasionally will keep them in good condition. But if this is not done, the wet—of course you will play in rain like any other lunatic!—will play havoc with the shafts, which will soon lose their former steeliness and shape. Know your clubs, and look well after them, and you will earn the good opinion of your caddie, which, believe me, is not to be despised.

CHAPTER IV

THE GRIP

To begin at the beginning of all things, my first lesson must be : *How to hold the club*. And it makes it specially difficult to lay down the law on this subject that so many different methods have been tried with such entire success. It seems that it is not absolutely necessary even to have the right hand below the left. In 1912, two important events were won by players who hold their clubs with the left hand below the right—the Championship of India by Mr. J. D. Gatheral and the Glasgow Championship by Mr. J. H. Irons, two of the finest amateur players golf has known, Mr. John Ball and Mr. Robert Maxwell both grip their drivers with the hands so much under the shaft that the finger-nails of both hands show on the top ; and that sterling golfer, Sandy Herd, sticks to the palm-grip beloved of our forefathers. But in spite of these remarkable variations of method, the fact remains that the professional players, with only one or two exceptions, and the majority of the amateurs, use some form of the overlapping grip, and this grip, I believe, holds

out to the ordinary golfer by far the best promise of success.

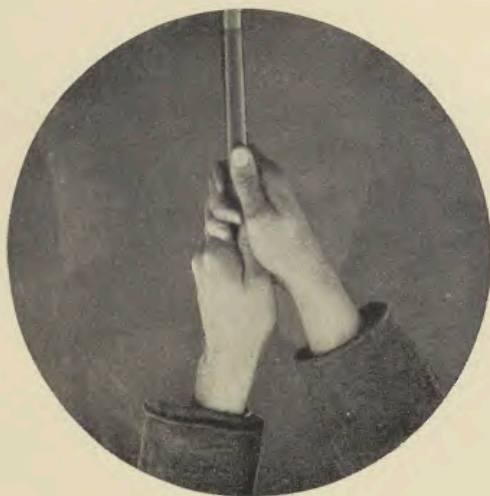
The form of the overlapping grip which has gained all but universal favour, is briefly this : The club is held firmly by the fingers of the left hand, with the left thumb resting on the top of the shaft. Then the fingers of the right hand are placed round the shaft in such a way that the little finger is hooked firmly round the left forefinger while the ball of the thumb almost completely covers the left thumb, the right thumb lying slightly round the shaft in such a position that the V between thumb and forefinger appears on the top of the shaft. Thus the two hands are welded together as completely as possible, consistently with no sacrifice of power.

My own grip differs from this in one respect only, but that a rather important one. Instead of having my right thumb curved slightly round the shaft, I prefer to have it pointing straight down. I cannot see any real objection to this peculiarity of mine, and in one direction, at any rate, I regard it as a useful safeguard. If a player has any tendency towards the by no means uncommon fault of letting the club droop down too much over his right shoulder at the top of his swing, the right thumb down the shaft affords an easy method of counteracting it. To be sure, it does not make it quite impossible to let the club drop down at the end of the up-swing ; but what comes to very much the same thing, it makes

it impossible to do it without being aware of it.

Certainly I can never play a stroke with my right thumb across the shaft without having an uneasy feeling at the top of my swing that I am losing control of the club. Quite likely this is pure imagination, but the fact remains that that right thumb supporting the shaft at that important point of the swing—the point where the actual stroke begins—gives me a confident sense of power over the club which I would not be without. Moreover, it seems to me that with the right thumb held round the grip there is a great danger of the shaft falling back between the thumb and forefinger, thus doing away with the very thing we are trying to obtain—the firm grip. On inland courses the ball often lies so close in to the turf that the least suggestion of a mishit instantly meets with its due reward ; there especially perfect control of the swing is invaluable, and for this purpose I have much faith in the virtues of the right thumb—so much so that the grip I have described is the one I adopt for every club from the tee to the green.

I should like to emphasise the fact that I have described the grip as being made with the fingers only. I have always been an advocate of this idea, which is now almost universally accepted. Unfortunately, I think that a great many amateur players who fondly imagine themselves to be employing a finger grip, are altogether deceived.



THE OVERLAPPING GRIP, WITH BOTH THUMBS
DOWN THE SHAFT.

- (I) At the top of the swing, back view.
- (II) In the address.



True, it is with the club held in the fingers that they commence the swing, but by the time the club has got to the top it has been allowed to drop into the palm of the hand again. The top of the swing is the true test. If the palms of the hands come away from the shaft at the top, you may be sure that both the grip and the swing are in perfect order.

Let me say at this point that I consider many golfers fall into error in having their grips made to suit the size of their hands. A man with big hands usually assumes that he ought to have a thick grip; but this idea is based on a fallacy. There might be some justification for it with the old-fashioned palm grip, but when the grip is with the fingers only the more padding there is the less chance of really gripping the club firmly. I strongly advise that the club should be gripped tightly by both hands, at least in the case of the finger grip. (If I did not overlap I probably should not grip so tightly with the right as with the left). I do not believe in the old idea in regard to gripping tightly with the left and loosely with the right, for if the object of the overlapping finger grip is for both hands to work in unison, it surely follows that you should grip equally firmly with both in order to bring this about.

There is one part of the game in which I am inclined to believe that the ordinary grip may be modified with advantage, and that is on the

putting green. Latterly I have fallen into the habit of holding my putter in exactly the same fashion as I do my other clubs ; but a few years ago I did not do so, and in my own mind I am convinced that I putted better then than now. And though I have never made any serious attempt to go back to the old way—for the simplicity of playing all one's strokes with practically the same grip has much to commend it—yet I still consider it to be the better plan.

The feature of it is that both wrists are kept squarely at right angles to the line of the putt. The thumbs are pointing straight down the shaft of the club, and the hollows of the wrists are exactly opposite one another. It is grip which allows perfect freedom for that pendulum-like swing which is universally declared to be essential to success on the green. And at the same time the position of the wrists makes it almost impossible for the player to twist the face of the putter out of its natural direction without a feeling of awkwardness, which should at once make him conscious of his mistake.

After the problem of *how* to hold the club comes the less important, but often completely neglected, question of *where* to hold it. And the obvious answer is, as near to the end of the shaft as possible. Of course there will be times when by reason of the nature of the lie or the stance, or the fury of the elements, the golfer may deem it desirable to play with a shorter grip than usual,

but his ordinary stroke should be made with the top of his left hand, say an inch from the end of the shaft. Less leaves no reserve for emergency ; more is useless superfluity.

CHAPTER V

THE TEE SHOT

MANY roads lead to Rome, but some of them take us there more quickly and with less trouble than others. According to many critics, I have completed my journey to that famous city (so to speak) in solitary state, my route being one untrodden by previous travellers. This, however, is an exaggeration, for although my methods in some important details differ from those generally accepted, the differences are on the whole so slight as to be barely noticeable. Still I admit that these exist, and I propose to deliver myself into the hands of my enemies by explaining them as I go along.

When the novice, proud in the possession of a new outfit, makes his first appearance on the course, his great desire is to hit a ball from the tee in something like the same manner as he has observed in the club's mightiest swiper, whose driving is like the driving of Jehu, the son of Nimshi, in that he driveth furiously. His thoughts dwell not upon the possibilities of bringing off a long putt, neither does he covet his neighbour's cut-back approach, nor lust after a low push shot

against the wind. He knows nothing of the game, except that he wants to give the ball a swipe that will make it soar into the air and vol-plane to earth again a couple of hundred yards away. And by this desire he handicaps himself badly, for he ought to "gang warily" at the outset.

In the first place, do not allow your caddie to tee up on a pyramid. It is not pleasant, even for a novice, to discover that he is known to the other members of his club by the sobriquet of "Eiffel Tower," or to be exposed to the humiliating experience of one unfortunate duffer in a foursome who missed his drive altogether and heard his partner promptly call for a niblick in order to negotiate "this blasted bunker." "The higher the tee the higher the handicap," says the proverb; and it is a wise word, for a high tee will have the very worst effect on your play through the green, where, at least on inland turf, the ball does not sit up at all as it does on the tee, but is more often depressed. By taking a high tee you destroy all similarity between the drive and the other strokes, and so add quite unnecessarily to the difficulties of a game which is already difficult enough. What is more important still, a high tee, though for some obscure reason it always appeals to the poor player as an obvious means of making the shot easier, really makes for neither length nor accuracy.

In the Westward Ho! "Caddies' Catechism" one question runs: "What should a ball be teed

with ? ” The obvious answer is, “ With sand ! ” but the one given in the catechism is “ With care ! ” Choose the spot for your tee so that the lie of the ground immediately behind the ball is perfectly level, and take care that it is not too close to sand-box, or disc, or anything else which will give your errant eye an excuse for wandering from the ball. The position of the tee should also be decided with an eye to a stance which is not only level but—what on a rain-sodden inland course is of considerable importance, and not always just the easiest thing to find—affording as firm a foothold as possible. Let me just add that if a player finds that the stance he has given himself is uncomfortable for any reason—as, for instance, if it brings his left foot on to the edge of the tee disc—he should not hesitate, even at the expense of seeming “ fidgety,” to change the position of his tee forthwith. No man can get in a good drive if he is tormented from the very commencement of his stroke with the idea that his stance is not as it should be.

The grip has already been described. Grasp the club firmly, but not feverishly ; for you are not going to slog, and on the tee there should not be the slightest chance of your club turning in your hand.

The stance now adopted almost universally is that known as the “ open,” and as I am going to urge the adoption of this for every stroke, it is perhaps necessary to explain at some length

what this open stance is. My explanation can perhaps be followed more easily by referring from time to time to the photographs which accompany this chapter.

The old teachers invariably taught their pupils to stand "square"—that is, with the feet equally distant from the intended line of play, and the ball midway between them. But of late years—whether owing to the advent of the rubber core, or merely owing to one of those changes in style which come about without apparent reason—this principle has been thrown overboard, and, following the example set by the leading players, the left foot is now always kept farther back from the line of play. In other words, the player faces more towards the hole.

The great point in favour of this stance is that it enables the club to be brought through better after the ball. Experience has also taught that it makes for better direction; for with the left foot forward, the player seems to be viewing the hole around his left shoulder, whereas with the open stance nothing prevents an uninterrupted view of the line he is so desirous of keeping to. The left foot should be, roughly, 12 to 14 inches behind the right, and the ball should be opposite a point about 6 inches behind the left heel.

These details are purely elementary; the player of some years' experience will know instinctively when he is standing comfortably, and will naturally alter his position accordingly. In my own

case, I know at once if my stance is right, but I do not go so far as to say that I take up exactly the same position to the fraction of an inch each time. Familiarity breeds contempt, and I seldom think of pausing to examine my stance, but I feel at once whether it is right or wrong. In passing, let me urge on golfers the necessity of keeping their feet in the one position. If the stance you take up is the correct one, it is obvious that any alteration of it during the process of swinging is going to have a bad effect on your stroke; if it is not the correct one, the time to alter it is before you commence the swing. The preliminary waggle of the "address" should be quite sufficient to show you whether all's well in this direction.

The next problem is the swing. It has often been observed that no two players swing alike; there is always a little something wherein they differ. And just because Vardon, Taylor, Braid, Herd, and a host of other good golfers present different styles to the eye of the onlooker, it is not easy to appreciate the fact that all these players bring their club on to the ball in precisely the same manner. Herd, for instance, has a flatter swing than Vardon, but I submit that, in the downward motion, their clubs are travelling in curves of exactly the same kind. What all these players possess in common, and what every golfer should endeavour to copy, is a rhythmic swing of the club. It is neither snatched back

nor taken up particularly slowly, but swung up with an easy lift, and the downward swing retraces the path of the upward one.

The one great fault with most players is mistiming. Because of this error many men possessed of strength sufficient to knock the cover off the ball are yet comparatively short drivers, while we often meet the puny player who obtains good length by no other means than timing correctly. Mistiming means that the player has been too hasty over the stroke ; he has commenced to *hit* too soon, with the result that no force is imparted to the stroke, or rather, what force has been applied has been expended at the wrong point of the swing and has never reached the ball. If you are to swing correctly the club should be taken back easily, without any tightening of the muscles ; and it is when the club is brought down that the force should be applied, and the weight of the body allowed to go after the ball, so that every ounce may be brought to bear.

Now let us turn back to the commencement of the swing. When we lift the club, the body is twisting round from the hips, and the left knee is bent in to a point a few inches behind the ball ; this means that a slight pressure is put upon the ball of the left foot. It is my opinion that when the club is being taken back the greater part of the weight of the body is on the right leg. In my own play I am positively certain that it is so, because I sway deliberately, for reasons which

I shall explain in another chapter: and I am perfectly conscious that I am shifting my weight from one leg to another. I am very positive on this point, and if anyone suggests that my idea of what I do is not correct, then I can only reply that I know best about my own play, and not being exactly a beginner, I have had ample time to think the matter out.

However, as the distribution of the weight is rather a controversial question, let me leave it there and resume the discussion of the upward swing. This should not be carried too far, for, after all, you have to get back again. Some players seem to forget this, and take the club back to a point that requires so much energy to bring it round again that little force is left for the stroke itself. The method of keeping the right thumb down the shaft which I have explained in the chapter on "The Grip" is specially designed to prevent overswinging, for the strain on the thumb enables you to tell at once when you have gone far enough.

The driver should be taken back straight for a few inches before the upward swing begins, so that you can feel as it were for the right groove. When the club has been taken back over your shoulder, if the swing be correct the toe of your club should be pointing straight down. Players who are off their drive should always make a point of ascertaining right away whether the club-head is in this position, for if it is not

they have the most reliable proof that the action of the wrists is at fault. This wrist action is fairly simple : the right is bent towards the grip, whilst the left is straight, the line from the elbow to the knuckles being unbroken.

During the upward swing the head should be in the same position as when addressing the ball ; that is, looking straight down. " Keep your eye on the ball," says the most ancient of golfing maxims, and its modern equivalent is only another way of putting the same thing. To move the head even a trifle either way generally means that the body has been shifted also, and this, unless done with the most perfect judgment, is bound to be fatal ; so that for the beginner at any rate " Head still " is one of the most important of rules.

And now to bring the club back. The action is simply the reverse movement of the upward swing. The human machine that has just been wound up is to be unwound at much greater speed, and all the force accumulated brought to bear in the forward sweep of the club. Your gaze should be fixed on the back of the ball, which is the part you are aiming to hit, and the speed of the club's motion should be increasing throughout the whole of the downward swing. But be sure that you do not expend your energy uselessly in trying to get up speed too soon, otherwise, as I have already pointed out, there will be no timing in the stroke, and you will

stand self-convicted of "pressing." But a rhythmic movement, however strong the blow, will always result in a sweetly hit ball.

Your weight may now be allowed to go forward along with the club, the right knee bent and the left stiffened. The club is carried forward—see that it does go forward for a few inches—and upwards, and the finish of the swing should see your body facing towards where the ball is already well on its way to the hole. Only remember that in the drive, as in every other stroke in golf, to raise the head too soon in order to watch the flight of the ball is to court disaster in the shape of a topped shot; and however good the swing has been it can be completely ruined by this most natural of faults.

It is apt to be taken for granted that at least on the tee the task of the inland golfer is exactly the same as that of his coast-bred brother. The drive is the same everywhere, and being played from a tee which the player builds to suit himself, is necessarily independent of the nature of the course. But this reasoning ignores one important factor in the problem: the nature of the turf on which the ball lands. The drive which will travel farthest on the sun-baked turf of St. Andrews in July, is a totally different stroke from the drive which is best suited to a rain-sodden city course in November. In the former case there is nothing surprising in a ball which runs for a hundred yards or more beyond the spot where it pitches.

In the latter, the amount of run is usually such as to require a foot-rule with the inches marked very plainly in order to measure it. And where the run is not worth considering it is only common sense to drive in the way that will give the longest carry.

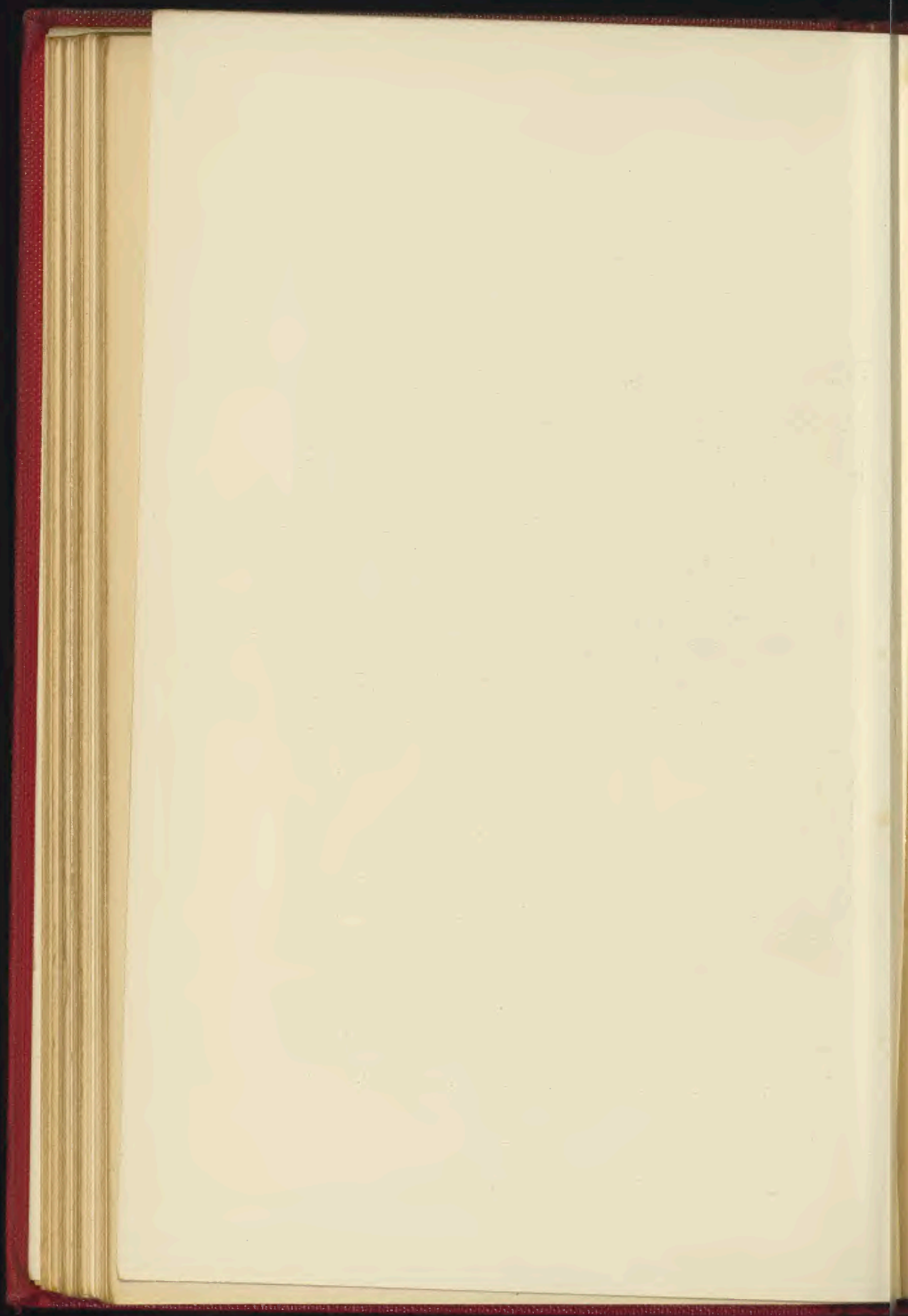
A practical example of the difference between the style suited to the obtaining of distance in the drive as a whole and that calculated to produce only a long carry was afforded by the driving competitions which were one of the features of an invitation tournament at Sandy Lodge, in which James Braid, Harry Vardon, Eric Bannister and I, all took part. In the competition for the longest drive there was nothing in it between Braid and myself, for while my "best of two" shots measured 251 yards, he was exactly a foot behind; Harry Vardon's distance was $236\frac{1}{2}$ yards. But here is the remarkable thing: in the competition for the longest carry—the best of two shots being again taken—I won with 242 yards, but Harry Vardon's carry was 217 yards against Braid's 202. Without wishing to infer too much from these figures, I think it is a fair deduction that the style of driving which Braid usually adopts is less suited to a far carry and more likely to obtain a long run than that favoured by Harry Vardon and myself. And that opinion agrees well with my own idea of the different methods to be employed in making the two kinds of stroke.

In either stroke, as I play it, the ball is opposite a point about six inches behind my left heel. But if I am playing for run, the stance is not so open as when I am simply trying to obtain the greatest possible carry : that is to say, my left foot is ever so slightly nearer to the line of the ball's proposed flight, and my right foot is drawn appreciably further back. My swing too, is different. I bring the club more down upon the ball, with the object of keeping the whole trajectory of its flight lower. Most important of all, I keep the toe of the club turned slightly outwards during the greater part of the swing, in fact, until the club-head is upon the point of striking the ball. But just as it is about to do so, I turn my right wrist over my left—to a very small degree certainly, but still to such an extent that the toe of the club, which was slightly turned out, becomes slightly turned in immediately after the ball is struck. The effect of this is that at the moment of contact the face of the club is drawn over the ball, to which it accordingly imparts a considerable amount of over-spin.

The first effect that this over-spin has is in assisting to keep the flight of the ball as low as possible. I make no pretence of being able to explain why it should do so, although I have rather a liking for a theory which I once heard and which amounted to this. While a ball is travelling through the air with over-spin, the portion of the ball which happens to be on top at any given



THE TEE SHOT: STANCE FOR MAXIMUM RUN.



moment is spinning forward, and therefore is moving with greater speed than the part of the ball which at the moment happens to be underneath, because there the spin is taking it backwards in the opposite direction to the motion of the ball as a whole. The result is that the top has always a greater power of overcoming the resistance of the air than has the lower part. Consequently, the top is always trying as it were to get ahead of the bottom, with the effect of making the path of its flight tend always to bend down towards the ground. Just in the same way as if you had a motor-car the wheels on the right-hand side of which were going faster than those on the left, it would slew round to the left. This so far counteracts the effect of the loft of the club, as to produce a much flatter trajectory than if no such spin were present.

It was the simplicity of this explanation which appealed to me: the question of its scientific correctness I must leave to others. But of the actual fact there is no possible doubt. Now, observe also that this lower trajectory means that the ball does not drop nearly so straight down at the end of its flight as an ordinary drive would do, but strikes the ground at a comparatively sharp angle and rebounds onwards as well as upwards, while the spin of the ball itself also helps to make it bound forward as soon as it touches earth. These forces come into play—to be sure with diminished power—each time that it comes

in contact with the turf again. It is easy to see, therefore, that its run is likely to be so much greater than that of the drive played in the other way, as to far more than make up for any loss of distance on the carry.

This is undoubtedly the style of shot which, on hard ground, will travel farther than any other. But, as I have already said, the inland golfer has continually to drive under conditions which make it absolutely certain that his ball, be it spinning forward never so blithely, will scarcely run a yard. Under such conditions there is nothing for it but to adopt the style of drive which will ensure the maximum carry; and naturally this means that the stroke has to be played in a very different fashion from that which I have just described. The ball that carries farthest is the ball that is played with a great amount of back-spin, and, as a natural accompaniment of the back-spin, has usually just a suspicion of slice. It is perhaps unnecessary for me to add that anything more than a suspicion is likely to result in loss of distance rather than in adding to it. The player should adopt a stance slightly more open than he normally uses; the more open stance will naturally, and without any further effort on the player's part, result in cut being imparted to the ball, and it is this which enables it to carry farther, although of course at the expense of making it land almost dead.

This distinction between the drive for carry and



THE TEE SHOT: STANCE FOR MAXIMUM CARRY.



the drive for run is a very important one to the inland golfer, who ought to make himself master of both, but especially of the long-carrying ball, which will be found an exceedingly useful kind of stroke in many other contingencies quite unconnected with the softness of the ground.

Before I conclude my remarks upon the drive, I should like to say something regarding the two besetting sins of the golfer on the tee. Of course, we all meet with our little misfortunes. I remember how once, in a Yorkshire Professional Tournament at Ganton, I brought off a sliced drive from the seventeenth tee that had, so to speak, a great deal more slice than drive. And I still recall the astonishment with which I once watched a greater golfer than I, drive from the home tee on St. Andrews Old Course and strike Rusack's Hotel. But for some unfortunates such incidents are not so much the exception as the rule.

There are several things that will produce a slice. One is that, in taking the club back the club has been pushed out too much. It has not been brought back straight for a few inches before being allowed to go up. The body has also gone back with the arms, and, when that happens, nothing can prevent disaster, because the club is almost certain to return again in the same groove as it followed on the way up. The consequence is that the ball is struck a glancing blow, for in the return of the club it travels across the body. When I am playing up to the hole with the wind blowing

from the right, I always endeavour to impart this cut to the ball, so that the ball swerves into the wind. But in that case it is sliced deliberately, and to counteract the effect of the wind. In the ordinary way a cut so imparted would mean the playing of the second with a niblick. To raise the right elbow in lifting the club is also to invite a slice, and the antidote for this is simply not to do it, but to keep the elbow no more than free from the side and let the right wrist turn correctly.

Of course the ball might finish in the rough to the right of the course without being sliced. In that case it is described as being "pushed out," and this is due to the fact that the body has swayed forward in advance of the club—with the result that when the club-head meets the ball it does so at an angle that sends the ball along a line to the right of the true one. It must be distinctly understood that I am not against a slight sway of the body if a long ball is desired, but it is essential that the sway be accompanied by perfect timing. It is fatal if the body comes forward too soon so that the hands are in advance of the club-head.

The reverse of the slice is the pull. To slice is human, but it does not follow that to pull is divine, though of the two faults the latter is the less obnoxious, especially in view of the fact that on most inland courses the majority of the hazards seem laid down for the slicer, and the puller is dismissed with an admonition. However, a bad pull is no more to be desired than a bad slice.

When you pull you do so, in most cases, by turning the right hand too much over the left at the moment of impact, this bringing the toe of the club over.

A too sudden twist of the body also results in a hook, for when this occurs you are bound to hit towards the left, and though there is not such a decided swerve on the ball, it finishes far out of line.

Of course there are many other sources of error besides those I have mentioned, and the player who is off for the time will usually have no difficulty in finding kind friends willing to tell him half a hundred things that he is doing wrong. But it is naturally a difficult matter for the untrained eye to diagnose a case successfully, for there are so many things, small in themselves, yet none the less vital, any of which may serve to prevent a good recovery. Should the reader be in this unhappy plight, the best thing he can do is to seek out his professional without delay, for a practical eye will probably be able at once to discern the fault and suggest the remedy.

CHAPTER VI

THE SECRET OF LONG DRIVING

"THE man who can putt is a match for anybody," is a saying attributed to Willie Park, winner of two Open Championships ; and J. H. Taylor, the first Champion of the succeeding generation, capped it with the observation that the man who can approach does not need to putt. I think I can best sum up the sentiment of the rubber-core age by adding that it is the man who can drive who gets the chance to approach. In those days the pride of every one of the great courses is its two-shot holes, the holes which can only be reached by an average player with a drive and a brassy. At these holes it is only the man who can drive far enough to be able to take some sort of iron for his second who has the opportunity of judging his approach with the accuracy needed to make a four certain and a three barely possible. And at the long holes, where it requires two of the very best to get up, even ten yards farther on each stroke will make all the difference between being on the green and having to try to lay a chip-shot dead with the odd. It is still true that the game is won and lost on the putting-green,

but you have first of all to get there, and in a hundred ways the long driver has the advantage, not the least of them being the moral effect upon an opponent of being constantly outdriven.

What is the secret of long driving? I am not going to pretend that I do not consider myself better fitted than most people to answer that question, and I have no hesitation in saying that the secret of long driving is simply hard hitting. But that statement requires a lot of amplification. I fancy I can hear a chorus of dejected beginners complaining that that is the very thing their teachers are continually warning them not to do. Well, both I and these teachers are right; and that is exactly the reason why I have kept these hints on long driving for a separate chapter instead of including them along with my other observations regarding the tee shot. It is simply ruination for a player to attempt to drive far until he has learned to drive surely and steadily; and the player who ignores this warning will never acquire either steadiness or length.

Besides, it is only the man who can drive steadily who can *afford* to drive far. It is not always sufficiently appreciated that the drive of 180 yards which deviates 20 yards from the straight line would have been 30 yards out of line if it had been hit hard enough to travel 270 yards, and that quite apart from the greater chance of mishitting which is the inevitable result of putting more power into the stroke than you have learned to

control. Some people, of course, imagine that length is the only thing that matters, like a certain long handicap player on a course where the "out-of-bounds" rule has continually to be referred to, who declared to the smoking-room on one occasion that "In that last match of mine I am sure there were more than a score of my drives that carried over two hundred yards." "Draw it mild, old man!" said someone. "Remember there are only eighteen holes in the round, so you couldn't have had twenty drives altogether!" "Couldn't I?" retorted the swiper indignantly. "I tell you I had five from the sixth tee alone!" This may be magnificent, but it is not golf.

Slow back; don't press; head still; keep your eye on the ball. These ancient maxims summarise the primary lesson of the links, and I do not think any beginner will go very far who neglects them. But after all they are no more than the primary lesson, and are not to be elevated to the position of the laws of the Medes and Persians, as if the rules of conduct which governed our golfing childhood could suffice for our later years. I consider that many teachers of the game do more harm than good by the way in which they drive home the time-honoured advice, without a hint that there is anything beyond.

When a golfer has learned to drive 170 or 180 yards with reasonable certainty, he has often to go through a period of quite unnecessary despair. He is commendably ambitious of being

able to drive much farther than that ; yet it becomes painfully evident that the most faithful attention to the advice to go slow back and not to press will never take him a yard farther forward. So he ceases to take his club back slowly, and he does press, with the natural result that his drive goes all to pieces ; and he is lucky if it does not take many painful months to build it up again. And all because no one has taken the trouble to explain to him what *don't press* really means.

Slow back itself is often misunderstood, and the novice who retorts that he has watched nearly all the champions and that not one of them takes his club back slowly sometimes waits in vain for an explanation. The truth is that once a player has learned to swing correctly and with practically mechanical accuracy, it matters very little whether the upward swing be fast or slow. But the slow upward swing always makes it easier to be accurate. Therefore the more difficult the lie, or the harder you are trying to hit, the more necessary is it that you should be careful to swing back slowly. It is only when you are playing an easy stroke which your muscles—if I may so put it—have learned by heart, that you can afford to swing back carelessly.

This is one point where the would-be long driver nearly always commences his search for trouble. He swings back quickly (which is nearly always to say jerkily) under the impression, it

would seem, that the force thus uselessly expended in the up-swing will in some unexplained way add to the impetus of the down-swing. Whereas the fact is that the jerky back-swing is not only a waste of energy but is almost certain to throw the whole swing out of gear and imperil the accuracy of the stroke. Besides this, the player is almost bound either to over-swing or to stop his club at the top of the swing with an abrupt jerk that may easily throw the club out of its proper position and, in any case, puts a strain upon the wrists that there is no sort of need for. For all these reasons the essential preliminary to a long drive is a slow up-swing.

On the down-swing, on the other hand, I believe, that it is hardly possible for the player to hit too hard or the club to travel too fast—always provided that the stroke is timed properly. And this brings us to the real problem of long driving : What is timing? To understand it, it is necessary to remark that the blow delivered by the golf club is not the result of one but of many forces. The body itself is swinging round as if pivoted on the backbone; the arms are swinging from the shoulders, the forearms from the elbows, the club itself from the wrists. All these motions are more or less independent; the aim of the player must be so to balance the different muscular forces by which these motions are governed that they all attain their maximum at the same *time*, and that time should be the moment when the

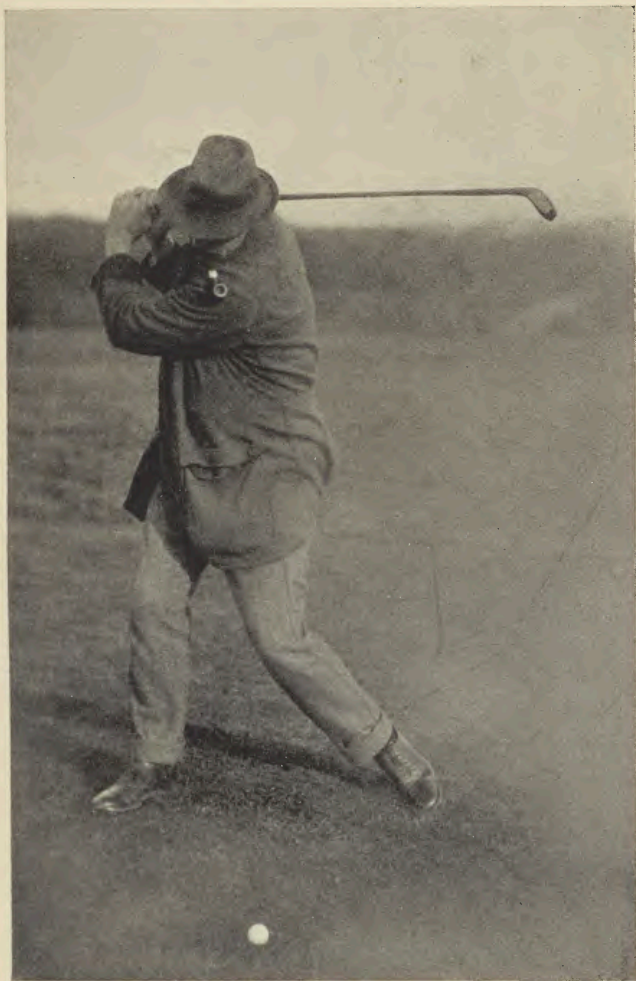
head of the club comes into contact with the ball. This is timing, as I conceive the meaning of the word. And pressing is neither more nor less than an error of timing by which one or more of the muscles exerts its force at the wrong time and the wrong point of the swing.

The beginner who is making his first attempts at long driving is nearly always sure to fall into the error of exerting too much force at the beginning of the downward swing. Even if he remembers to take the club back slowly he tries to make up for lost time, as it were, by getting up speed as quickly as possible coming down. The usual result is a jerky, uneven swing, and a foozled drive; but even if the ball is struck truly, there is no gain in power, because part of the force has been expended long before the club reached it. What the golfer must realise is that at the top of the swing the club is for an infinitesimal space of time at rest. And whether the player is letting himself out at the shot or sparing it the speed of the club's motion should increase gradually and evenly from this position of rest until club-head and ball meet at the bottom of the swing.

In its worst form the sin of mistiming is responsible for many a foozle. For instance, if the arms do their share of the work too soon, leaving the elbows and wrists behind, the hands are away in front of the ball by the time the club-head reaches it, and the result is almost

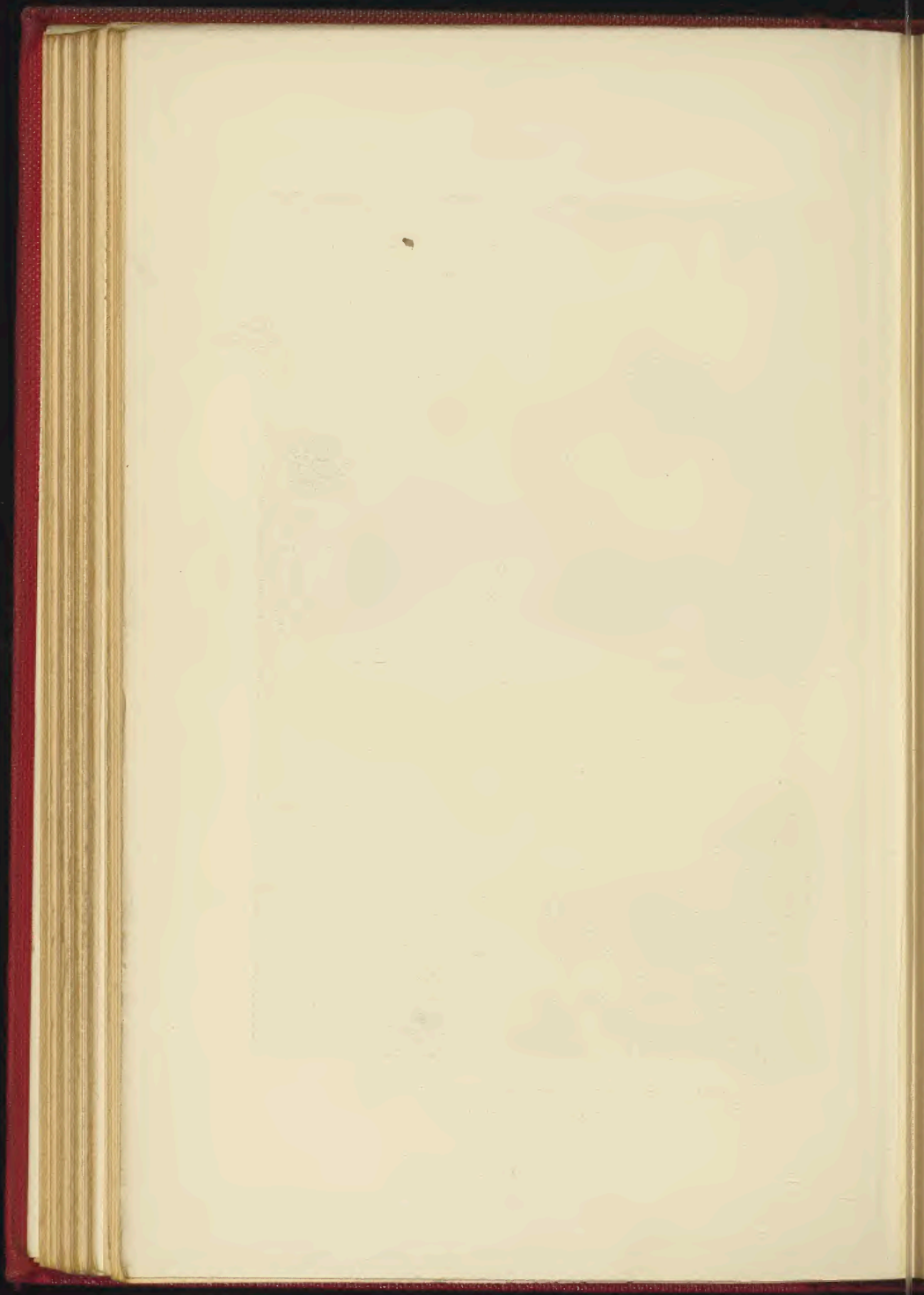
certain to be a foundered drive. And apart from such grosser forms of sin, it only requires a very slight error in timing to rob a drive of much of its power.

This brings me to a feature of my own play which has, I believe, aroused more hostile criticism than all the rest of my little idiosyncrasies put together: I mean the swaying of the body. I have already said that the power that impels the ball in the drive is the result of several more or less independent muscular forces. By swaying my whole body in the up-swing slightly away from the direction in which I am about to drive, and swaying back on to the ball in the down-swing, I bring into play a fresh and additional force, and a very important one too, seeing that it has behind it the whole of my somewhat considerable *avoiirdupois*. There is, however, one great difference between this new source of power and all the others: none of the rest force you to move the head; but if you sway you must move it. And that is a big difficulty, because to move the head is to move the eyes, on whose view of the ball the whole mental calculation of the stroke depends. It is obvious that if the head shifts its position even a few inches the position of the ball relatively to the player is appreciably altered. It follows that any considerable swaying of the body must be made at the expense of the accuracy of the stroke. As a matter of fact, I do sway through a very small angle indeed.



THE TEE SHOT: THE TOP OF THE SWING.

Showing the sway of the body.



Yet slight though it is, the sway is there, and I consider that it is partly the reason of the power which I get into my shots from the tee. At the same time I should like to warn any players who may have in their minds to imitate me in this matter, that the use of sway belongs to the advanced stages of golf, and should certainly never be attempted by anyone who has not completely mastered the other branches of the art of driving. Sway, if it is used at all, should only be adopted as a sort of crowning ornament to an already reliable and finished style. In this also the great matter is good timing. If after swaying back you fail—as you may quite easily do—to come forward again quickly enough, the result will probably be a slice of the most egregious kind.

Now, in order that the body should not fall behind in the forward sway it is essential that it should pivot freely. In my opinion it is impossible to do this if the left foot is kept with the toe turned in, in the attitude which photographs of players driving towards the camera have made so familiar. In my own drive, as the club comes through and the body swings forward, I turn on the ball of my left foot, which at the finish of the stroke is pointing almost straight towards the hole. I find that this not only helps me to get the weight of the body behind the stroke, but makes the whole swing smoother and easier.

One final word of warning I should like to emphasise. Height, reach, and physical strength are not everything in golf. They are not even the main thing. But still they count. It is quite a mistake for the man of small frame and slight physique to imagine that he ought to be able to hit as far as his bigger and stronger opponent, for, other things being equal, the odds are on the man who can hit hardest. Hard hitting is no use without correct timing; but if you time the stroke rightly, in my opinion the harder you hit the better.

CHAPTER VII

THE BRASSY

Is there any other stroke which is productive of so much real pleasure as a well-hit brassy shot? In power the brassy is very little less than the driver, and any inferiority in point of distance is more than compensated for by the ease with which—given a decent lie—the ball comes up off the club, thanks to the fact that the weight of the club-head is not altogether behind the ball, but partly underneath, and that the face is slightly more sloped back.

My observations regarding the brassy must naturally be brief, because in the main the method of playing it is a mere repetition of that already described in the chapter dealing with the driver. Let me warn you, however, that there is no club which penalises more severely the player who uses it when the lie is not suitable than does the brassy; and the very nature of inland turf makes it dangerous to use it rashly. On the majority of inland courses good brassy lies are few and far between, and when that club is taken we do well to remind ourselves that we must get well down in order to get well up. The rarity of good

lies through the green is responsible for the ever-increasing popularity of the baffy, a club that in the hands of players such as Herd and Duncan can be made to work wonders. But in their case the club is used chiefly for miraculously long approach shots up to the green, and not for the mere slogging work through the course. I am not a baffy player myself, for I find that if the lie is not good enough for a brassy my cleek will take me as far as I want.

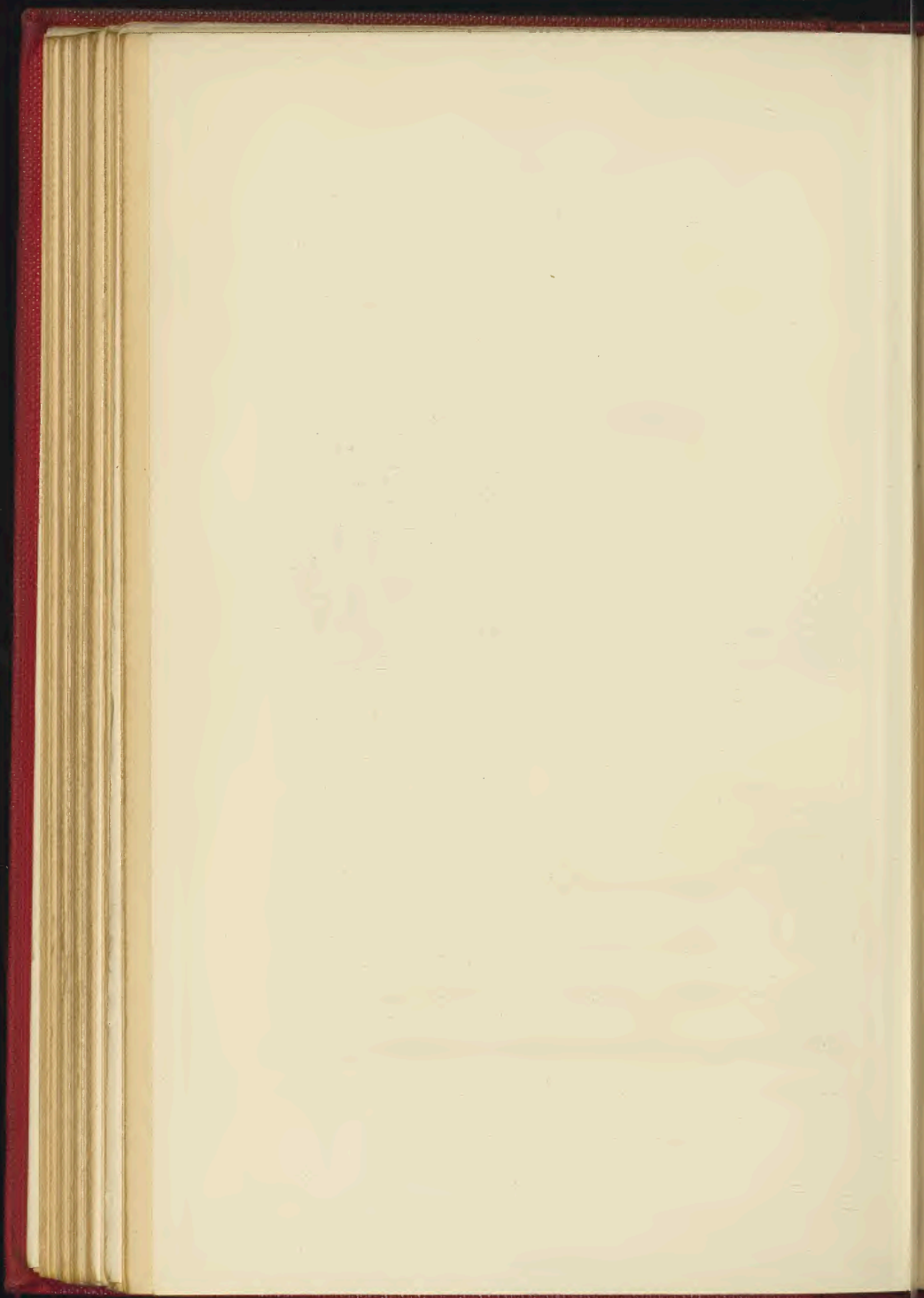
If I was asked what player's style was most suited to good brassy play, I should have no hesitation in naming Harry Vardon, and this for the reason that he seems to lift his club a little straighter up than do most others. I am quite prepared to be told that his club is travelling in the same groove as mine when within a foot of the ball, but watching him I get the impression that it is the style of his swing which makes him the born brassy player that he is. Mr. Hilton, again, is an excellent performer with the club, especially so when using it in place of a cleek; but I do not think that even this brilliant amateur finds much scope for his favourite stroke in inland golf, however much he employs it elsewhere.

The brassy seems to have been originally designed for a kind of lie not uncommon on inland courses—the lie on a bare, smooth surface, such as is afforded by a road or path. The golfers of the famous links at Musselburgh found that frequent recoveries from the road which skirts the



THE BRASSY SHOT FROM AN INLAND LIE: THE TOP OF THE SWING.

Showing how the swing is more upright than in the tee shot.



course ran up too big a score, not only on the card, but also in the club-maker's shop. And the tradition is that Mr. Gilbert Mitchell Innes, one of the most famous players of his day and many times a medal winner at St. Andrews, Musselburgh and Prestwick in the sixties and seventies, was the man to bethink himself of having a metal plate nailed on to the sole of his spoon in order to preserve it from damage through contact with the hard surface of the road. Thus sprang into being the great progenitor of the brassy.

If the ball is lying perfectly clean, as it often is in such a case, and the distance calls for a full shot, there is perhaps no reason why the stroke should not be played in exactly the same manner as on the tee, except, of course, that the brassy is used in place of the driver. But though the ball is practically teed, the hard road below it seems to hold out threats of a broken shaft as punishment for a fozzled shot ; and the rule against soling the club makes it rather more difficult to take an accurate aim ; and therefore I think that it is a great deal simpler, in order to make the ball rise quickly, to play it in the same manner as I am about to describe for a brassy shot through the green.

Through the green the method of playing the brassy differs from the method of playing the driver. In the first place, the ball lies low ; it does not, as in a tee shot, hold out promise of great

possibilities, but seems rather to emphasize the need for closer attention on the part of the player. Unless the ball is absolutely perched up, it is of no use standing as you would for a drive. You must realise that the ball has to be raised, and in order to bring this about you should begin by standing a shade nearer to the ball. It is necessary to swing more abruptly, and the farther away from your ball you stand the longer must be your reach, and your swing therefore flatter and less suited to this stroke. Therefore stand closer in.

If the lie be good, there is no necessity to alter the angle of the feet in relation to the ball, which should still be about in a line with a spot five or six inches behind the left heel. But if the ball is lying in its usual inland manner, then it is advisable to keep the left foot a little more back. By this the reader will at once conclude that I am going to suggest a little cut, and I do so, convinced that cut is not such a criminal offence as most folk suppose. The principal object when confronted with a tight lie is to lift the ball, and this can be more easily done if the club is brought a trifle across the ball, which is not necessarily inconsistent with obtaining a straight shot. But although I do not insist on the use of cut, I do urge that in taking the club back you lift it a little straighter up. The player who fancies a half swing—which must needs be a flat one—will never feel at home with a brassy. There is no room

for the club to graze the ground six inches before reaching the ball; and this is just where a flat swing always lets the player down. Besides, with a flat swing the ball, be it struck never so true, leaves the club and continues with a low trajectory, and this is fatal when a bunker guards the way some fifty yards ahead. The club should meet the ball at the lowest level of its arc, and be carried forwards and upwards; then, if your swing be correct, it will lift the ball every time.

I have remarked that you cannot take liberties with this club. There can be no question of attempting a pull unless the lie be good. You can slice with ease—the merest novice will show you how to do it; but so surely as you attempt a pull from a tight lie, you will smother the ball nine times out of ten. I always tilt the face of the club back a little in playing “inland lies” with either brassy or cleek; but, having done so, I do not turn my right hand over the left at the moment of striking with the brassy to such an extent as I shall afterwards show you I do with a cleek. The reason is that while the loft on the iron clubs removes the fear of driving the ball down, in the case of the brassy this is a danger which cannot be ignored.

My advice to you in playing the brassy is not to be afraid of hitting; but you must not, in an effort to hit, snatch the club back. You only waste your strength in so doing. Rather let the club go up easily; once it is right back you can

put your whole force into the stroke. I believe that if the club has gone up correctly the down movement will also be in order. It is in the first movement of the swing that so many go wrong. The club pushed out or whipped quickly round the legs in the up swing at once destroys all chance of a good stroke.

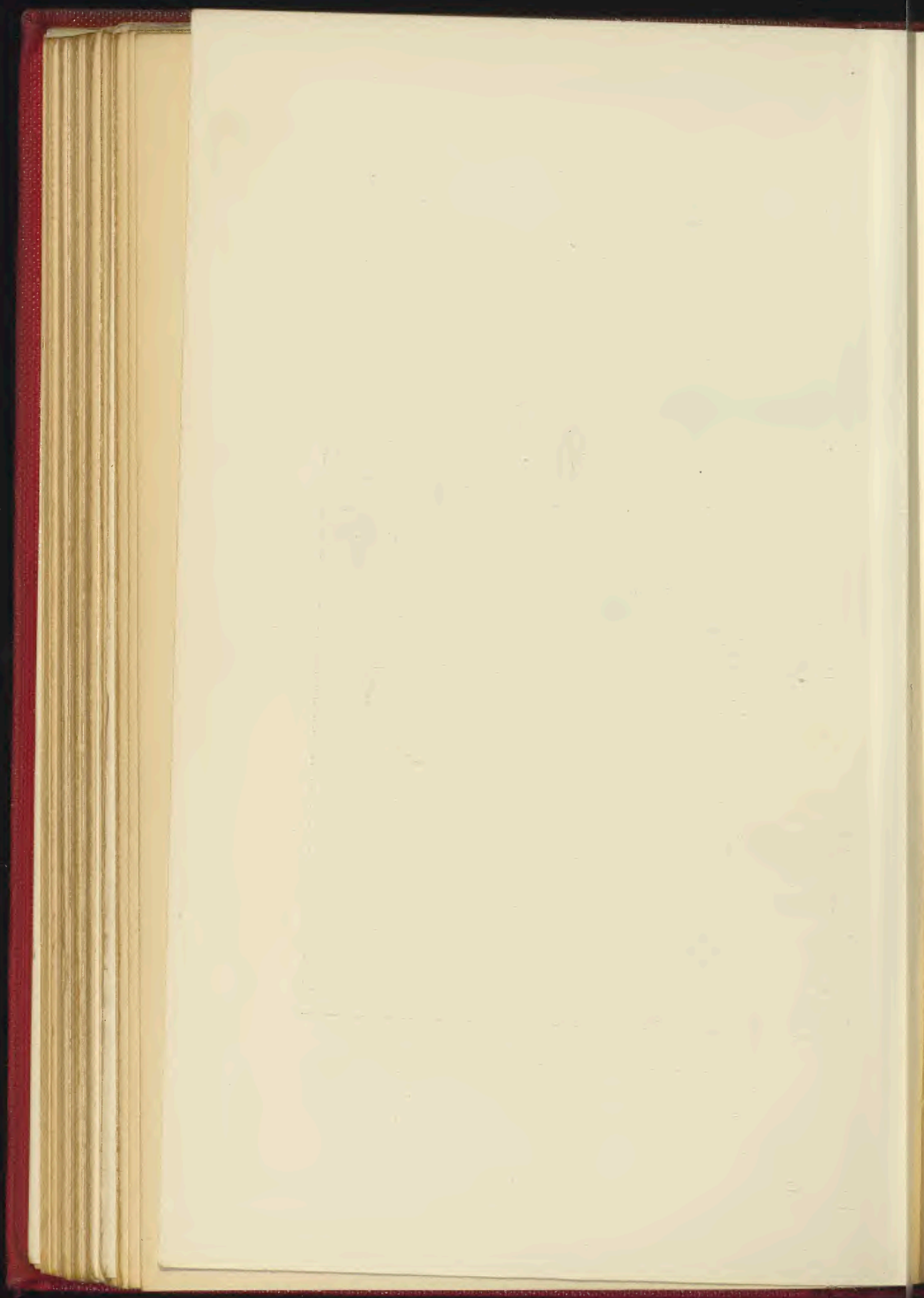
Owing to the ball lying low, there can be none of that delicate wrist work with the brassy shot that there is with the drive; with the brassy the wrists should not be flexible at the moment when the ball is struck, for we inland golfers invariably bang the ground in our effort to lift the ball, and any flexion will have a bad effect on the stroke. For the same reason it is well always to grip the brassy firmly.

In one direction the inland player possesses a distinct advantage in using the brassy. The deadness of inland turf makes it easy for the ball to draw up quickly, the more so when the stroke is played, as I have suggested, with a slight amount of cut. Consequently the brassy can be used for a long approach shot with a great deal more of accuracy than is possible on a sea-side links.

Of late it has become quite a fashion in certain clubs to use the brassy in place of the driver from the tees. I cannot make it too plain that the proper club to drive with is the driver. Of course the shortness of the hole or the presence of a hazard at an inconvenient distance may



THE FINISH OF THE BRASSY.



occasionally make it advisable to use some other club from the tee. But where, as usually happens, length is the primary object, the driver is the only satisfactory weapon. The player who drives with his brassy commonly explains that he finds he can do better with it because the shorter shaft, or the stiffer shaft, or the greater loft of the brassy, makes the shot easier. And no doubt his statement of his case is perfectly accurate so far as it goes. The fallacy is that his reasons only amount to saying that he has been fool enough to play with a driver whose shaft is too long or too whippy, or the lie of whose face is too upright for him. No doubt if his brassy is better suited to his requirements he will do better with it even from the tee. But why not try using a driver with a shaft of the right length and degree of stiffness, and with the amount of loft he likes?

The real difference between two clubs is that the weight of the driver head is more directly behind the spot where it comes in contact with the ball, and less underneath that spot than is the case with the second in command, and this makes the driver distinctly the more powerful club. The only thing that really can be said for the idea of using the brassy for the drive is that only one club has to be mastered instead of two, which, perhaps, makes the game easier to start with. But in the long run it involves a quite unnecessary handicap. I confess that the brassy is not a club of which I have at any time been greatly enamoured; and

even through the green, whenever the lie is really difficult, I always prefer to take out my cleek, whose accuracy and straightness make up for any loss of distance .

CHAPTER VIII

THROUGH THE GREEN

It would be wrong to assume that a good player is necessarily on good terms with every club, for even the best of us has his likes and dislikes. And no club is more often the subject of the golfer's antipathy than that much abused but serviceable weapon, the cleek. Why it should be so passes all comprehension; but the fact remains that not ten men out of twenty use it, while the rest pin their faith to baffies or driving-mashies. Naturally, in golf the end justifies the means, and, provided the player gets there, the club he uses is a merely secondary consideration. But personally I am biassed in favour of a cleek where the distance calls for its use, and I consider that the inland golfer especially, should give this club a fair trial before casting it from him.

The only advantage, as it seems to me, which the driving-mashie has over the cleek is that, in playing from the rough, or from any lie where the ball is a little off the ground, the deeper face of the former club diminishes the risk of going clean below the ball. But the wider blade is actually a disadvantage in any ordinary lie, because it makes it

more difficult to get the centre of the club face down to the ball. And it must be remembered that a shot struck too near the lower edge of the club face, loses power just in the same way as a shot struck off the toe.

I think that where the majority of players fail with the cleek is in the difficulty they experience in getting the ball up, and it is just this failure that makes them turn to a baffy. And yet, when we think of the narrowness of the cleek blade, it seems obvious that if the stroke is played correctly the lower half of the ball should be struck and all the loft we want easily obtained.

In actual distance the cleek is, in these days of the rubber-cored ball, very little less powerful than the brassy, and, despite all that has been written, and still more than has been said, regarding the difficulty of mastering it, to me it appears a much easier club to play successfully. If only the hole is sufficiently far away, there are scores of golfers who call for their brassy in preference to their cleek to play out of all sorts of lies, possible and impossible. And the result is usually of a sort to make gleeful opponents comfort one another with the assurance that even when things look blackest there is no need to give up the hole so long as X's brassy remains unbroken.

To begin with, the swing of the cleek is not so full as in the case of the brassy. We are all conscious that the shorter the swing the less likelihood is there of a wild stroke. We are seldom afraid



THE STANCE FOR THE CLEEK SHOT.



of pulling or slicing a mashie or an iron shot, but when on the tee our mental attitude is strangely different, as we view the long stretch of the rough on either side and exaggerate to ourselves the narrowness of the cut portion. The reason is that we are fully aware of the difficulty of hitting with perfect accuracy when taking the full swing which the driver demands. But if straight and accurate hitting is desirable in the drive, it is ten times more so when we come to play a long second up to the green, because even if the green is not closely guarded, the difference between a well placed shot and an inaccurate one is very likely to be the difference between a four and a five. And where the hole is too long to be reached in two strokes, it is scarcely less essential to place our second carefully, because a wild stroke that takes us into trouble will make a sad difference in our chances when we come to the approach.

I do not think it admits of argument that with the shorter swing the judgment of the shot becomes much easier. It is given to few to play a half-brassy shot in preference to a cleek with the same ease and skill as Mr. H. H. Hilton. Even in his case that is a stroke which has only been acquired by long practice, and I believe that the ordinary player can attain the same end much more quickly and with infinitely less trouble by giving a fair chance to the cleek. It is a difficult thing to ask, I know, but if players who imagine that they cannot play this club, would

try to forget the idea, and trust more in the club and less in themselves they would soon find it, not the *bête-noir*, but the 'dark horse' of the menagerie.

This is one point in favour of the club requiring the shorter swing. Another lies in the fact that with the iron club we are never afraid of getting well down to the ball, whereas it requires a certain amount of courage and confidence in oneself to do so with a wooden club. Yet on the average clay course, except under the most favourable conditions, this is exactly the shot which we are continually being called upon to negotiate. The ball nestles close in to the surface of the ground, and to pick it off cleanly with the brassy is a matter of the greatest difficulty. The unskilful player is very apt to find that the attempt results in his imparting a cut to the ball which brings it to rest somewhere far to the right of the fairway. Whereas even the most timorous is not afraid of digging a little with an iron club, and by so doing gains in straightness infinitely more than he loses in distance.

The difference in shafts also makes it easier to get down to the ball with the cleek, for its stiff shaft is more adaptable to rough work than the slimmer shaft of the wooden club. The cleek shaft, without being rigid, should always be on the stiff side, for in all probability it is on it we shall call to extricate us from our next cuppy lie, and as in that case a little turf simply must be

taken, any give in the shaft will bring about the failure of the stroke.

It cannot be denied that especially in playing on heavy turf there is a tendency to slice even with the cleek, and perhaps therefore, my own method of preventing this will be of special interest to the inland golfer. As a matter of fact I play every cleek shot in the following manner. With the knowledge that I shall slice unless I guard against it, I deliberately play for a pull. I stand more out,—that is to say, I aim to the right of the hole; and I bring about the pull by turning the right wrist over at the moment of impact. This means that the club meets the ball with the toe slightly turned in and the pull naturally follows. At the same time the term “pull” must not be taken too literally, for in this stroke there is nothing of the “south to east” about the flight of the ball. As a matter of fact it goes perfectly straight; the alteration of the stance corrects the change in the direction of the stroke brought about by the toe being turned over and the pull serves simply as an antidote to the slice that I feel sure would otherwise have been the result. In a wind I play the stroke up to the hole in a different manner, as will be explained in a later chapter, but given a calm day, my method of play is as I have described.

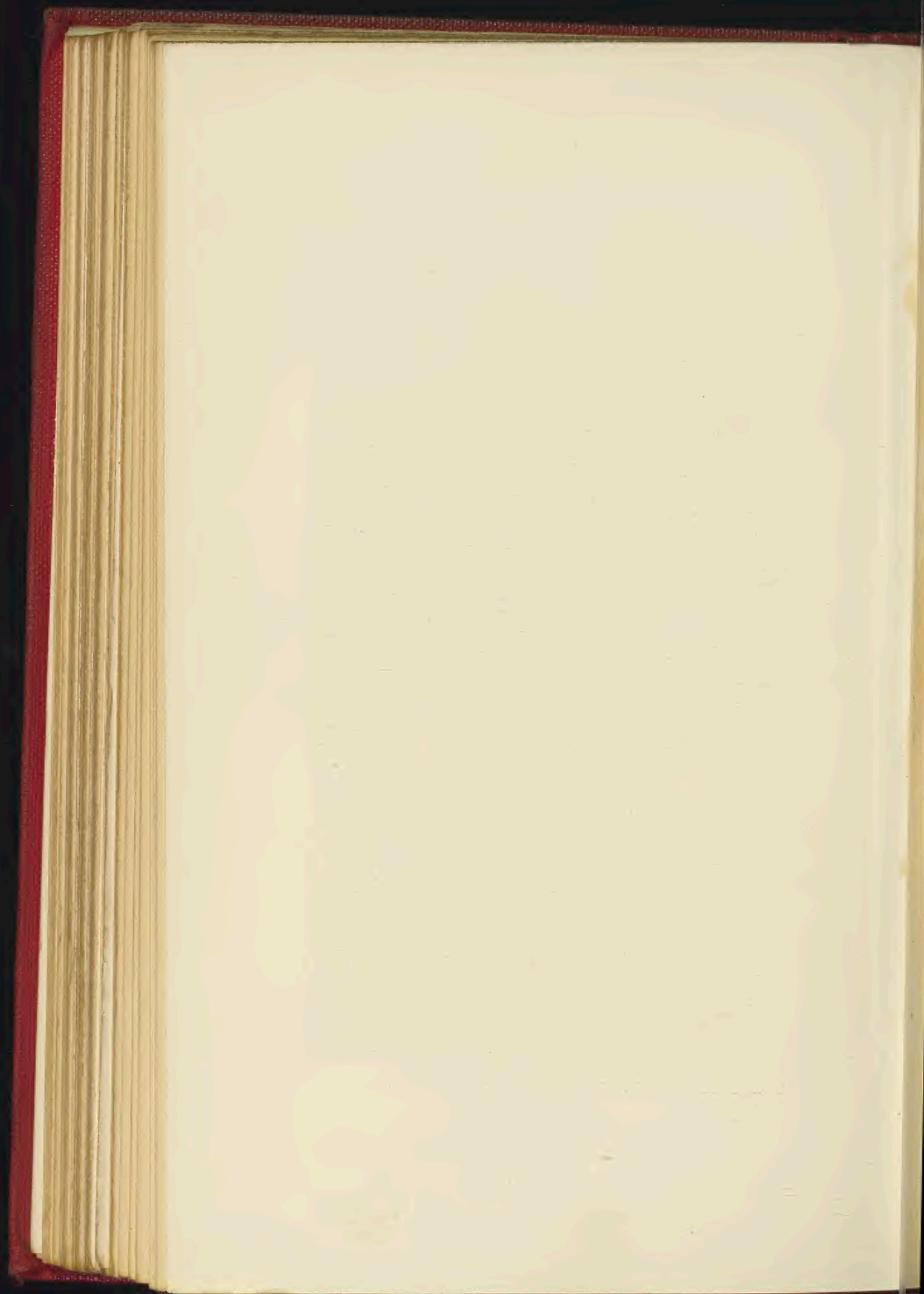
Against a high wind, there can be no two opinions that the cleek is a better weapon than the brassy. We never really obtain a high ball with it, whereas

we are apt, when playing a brassy, to get a stroke that seems to be the sport of the breeze, falling to earth in a spot far removed from the correct line of play. By coming down on the ball with the cleek in such a manner as to take a little turf after striking it, we can punch the ball lower and keep it straighter against the wind. This may appear to many players to be a very advanced type of stroke, but it is not so difficult as it reads, and there is not the slightest doubt that the ball so struck keeps the line better. Care should be taken, however, that the stroke is not overdone, otherwise half-a-crown's worth of good rubber will be utterly destroyed by being topped as a result of a premature sway forward.

This particular shot with the cleek is one of the most useful in the whole of the inland golfer's bag, and it is in a sense typical of the methods which he is practically forced to adopt. There is no doubt whatever that the manner of our swing on inland courses must, in order to bring off the strokes successfully, be of the up-and-down kind. Take the ball that is lying cupped, or close in to the ground, say a hundred and seventy yards from the hole. It is no earthly use standing as you would on the tee or swinging in the same manner; you must meet the situation by standing a little more in front of your ball, and coming more down upon it. The reason why a player so often fails—he usually takes the ground



THE CLEEK SHOT: THE TOP OF THE SWING.



behind—is because he has not altered his stance and swing to suit the lie.

Now the cleek is distinctly a shorter club than the driver or brassy. The length of my own, for instance, is 40 inches from the sole to the end of the shaft, and for the average player 39 inches will be found quite long enough. Of necessity, therefore, you must stand nearer to the ball than you would do in playing your wooden clubs. In other respects the position of the ball is exactly the same as in the case of your wooden clubs, that is, a trifle inside your left heel. The stance is also similar, except that since you are using a shorter club, you must keep your feet a trifle closer together, the right foot being brought a little nearer in. You will find that, by thus standing closer up to the ball, you can the more easily obtain the up and down swing the utility of which in lifting the ball from the lowly lies of inland golf, I have already pointed out.

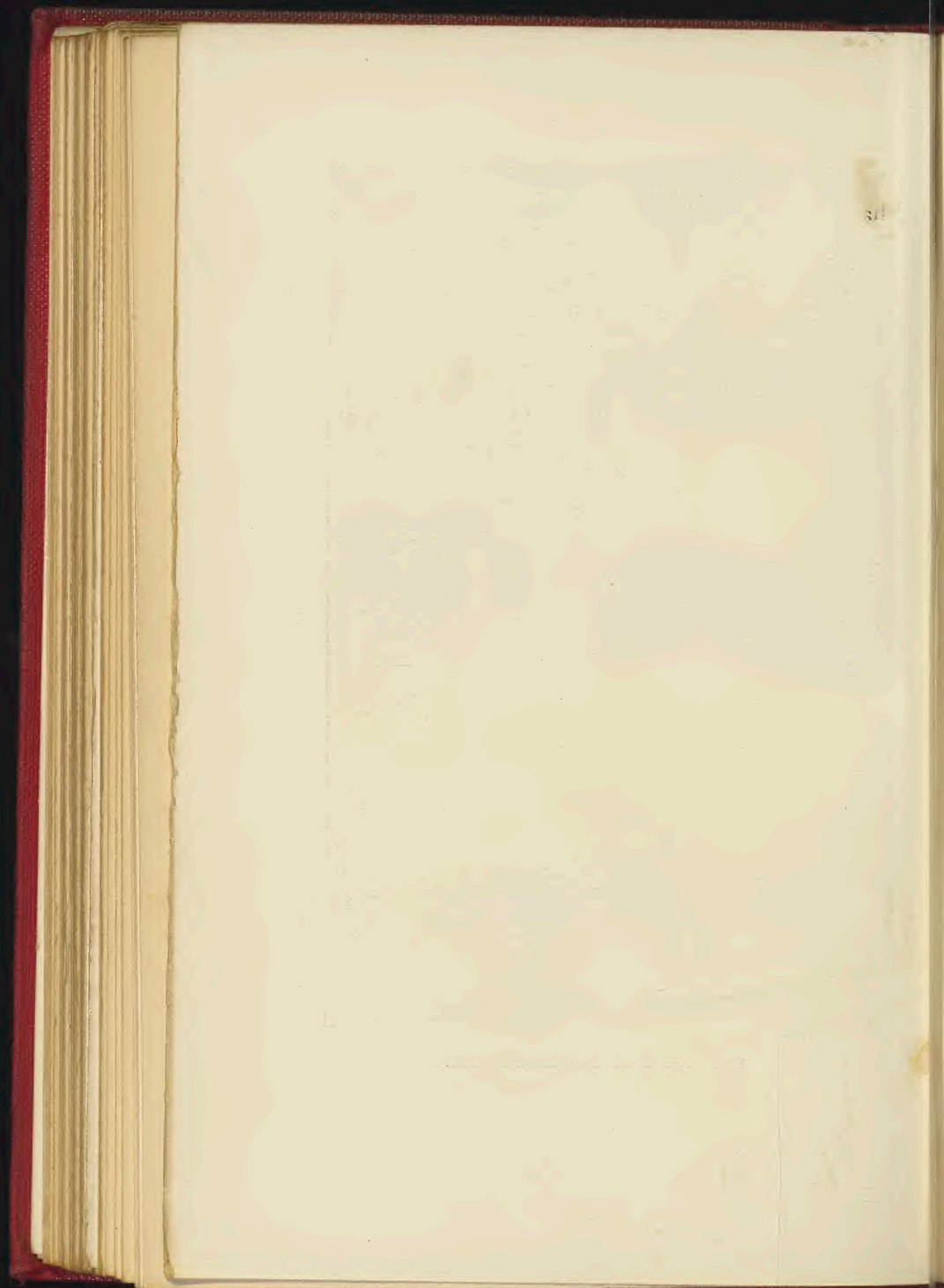
In addressing the ball, the body should be slightly turned toward the hole ; the arms should be just free from the body, and in taking the club back, you should turn in just the same manner as with a driver, commencing the turning movement from the left hip. See that you do not turn away too much ; you can easily discover any tendency to do so by taking care to observe whether your left heel is turning outwards, for the more the left heel points towards the hole the farther round are you turning.

With the cleek, and in fact, in all your iron strokes the club must commence to rise a little sooner than with a driver. You are going to describe a sharper curve, with a shortened swing. Many players look upon a full shot with a cleek as a replica of that with a driver, but it should not be so, for the length of the swing becomes less by steady gradations from the driver down to the mashie. But the mistake of over-swinging is not more fatal than that of not swinging far enough; for the player who falls into the latter fault usually becomes conscious of it, whilst the club is in the air, and endeavours, by increasing its speed, to obtain the length that his mind warns him he is not going to get. You can guard against overswinging by not letting the right elbow get too far away from the side, for it is fairly obvious that the more it is permitted to do so, the greater will be the length of the swing obtained. A further fault consequent upon this elbow lifting is usually a tendency to slice.

It is a difficult matter to resist the temptation to hit, but it is a fault that must be checked until such time as you are absolutely sure of yourself. The beginner is often astonished by the length he has obtained when "playing short"; even an advanced golfer is sometimes annoyed by the same discovery and the thought crosses his mind that he could have carried the hazard, if he had gone for it. But the shot that was played easily



THE FINISH OF THE CLEEK SHOT.



had been truly struck and perfectly timed, whereas it is more than likely that had the carry been attempted he would have pressed with dire results.

On the other hand, if the stroke is not pressed, but played in the proper way, I don't believe that it is possible to hit too hard with the cleek, whose shorter swing is not so readily thrown out of gear as the full-swing of the wooden clubs. But in attempting to put all he knows into the stroke, the average golfer goes wrong in one particular manner—he takes the club up too quickly; the effect of which is that his balance is upset. Whereas if he would only take the club up more deliberately, he could come down as hard as he likes with good results.

Another important maxim which is apt to be forgotten in the effort to force the shot, although the observance of it is one of the very factors which contributes most to the length obtained is: Always remember to bring the club well through after the ball.

CHAPTER IX

CONCERNING THE IRON

THE golfer who has not a friendly feeling for his iron is no gentleman. The true golfer, from the days when, as a novice, he shifted a divot and glanced quickly and apprehensively round to see if he was observed, down to his most recent escapade, has learned to look upon the iron as the one club on which he can rely. And, curiously, it is also the one club that has stood its ground against all passing fancies on the part of the designers in golf metal; for if we examine the bags of six players, we shall perhaps find six different varieties of mashies and ditto putters, but the iron family has always been noted for the strong resemblance between its different members.

I would not discard my iron for its weight in silver, but somehow I get little practice with it; and this, I believe, is due to the lengths that go to make what are nowadays considered good holes. If we take the ordinary long hole, that is to say, a hole of just over 500 yards, it is a case of two wooden club shots and a short approach. The next usual length is about 430 yards, and here, with the present ball, a decent driver can get up

quite easily with his second. There is no classical length between this and the short hole, which may be anything up to 190 yards : and this is about the only place where there is any need for an iron. Naturally in the above remarks, I am not taking into consideration either adverse winds or those accidents which sometimes occur to the best regulated tee shots, and it may well be that at the next long hole I play fortune will cause me to wish I had never laid myself open to one of her revenges and a foozled drive give me an opportunity for an iron shot when I least expect it. But the fact remains that the prevailing ideas of course architecture supply the reason why the iron is so little used in first class golf.

In collecting my notes for this chapter I set them under the following heads : Adopt an open stance ; Stand closer to the ball ; Don't straddle ; Grip firmly ; Take a three-quarters swing ; Remember that direction is more essential than distance ; Don't force ; Drive the ball down ; and, trust the club. I think I cannot do better than proceed to explain my ideas regarding each of these points in turn.

In the first place, the open stance is the only one that is suited for the iron shot, and as its nature has already been explained, there is no reason to labour the point. It must, however, be understood that the shorter the club we are called upon to play the closer must we stand to the ball, for in no stroke should we permit our arms to be too

far out from the body, and so in playing an iron or a mashie we naturally stand a little closer in.

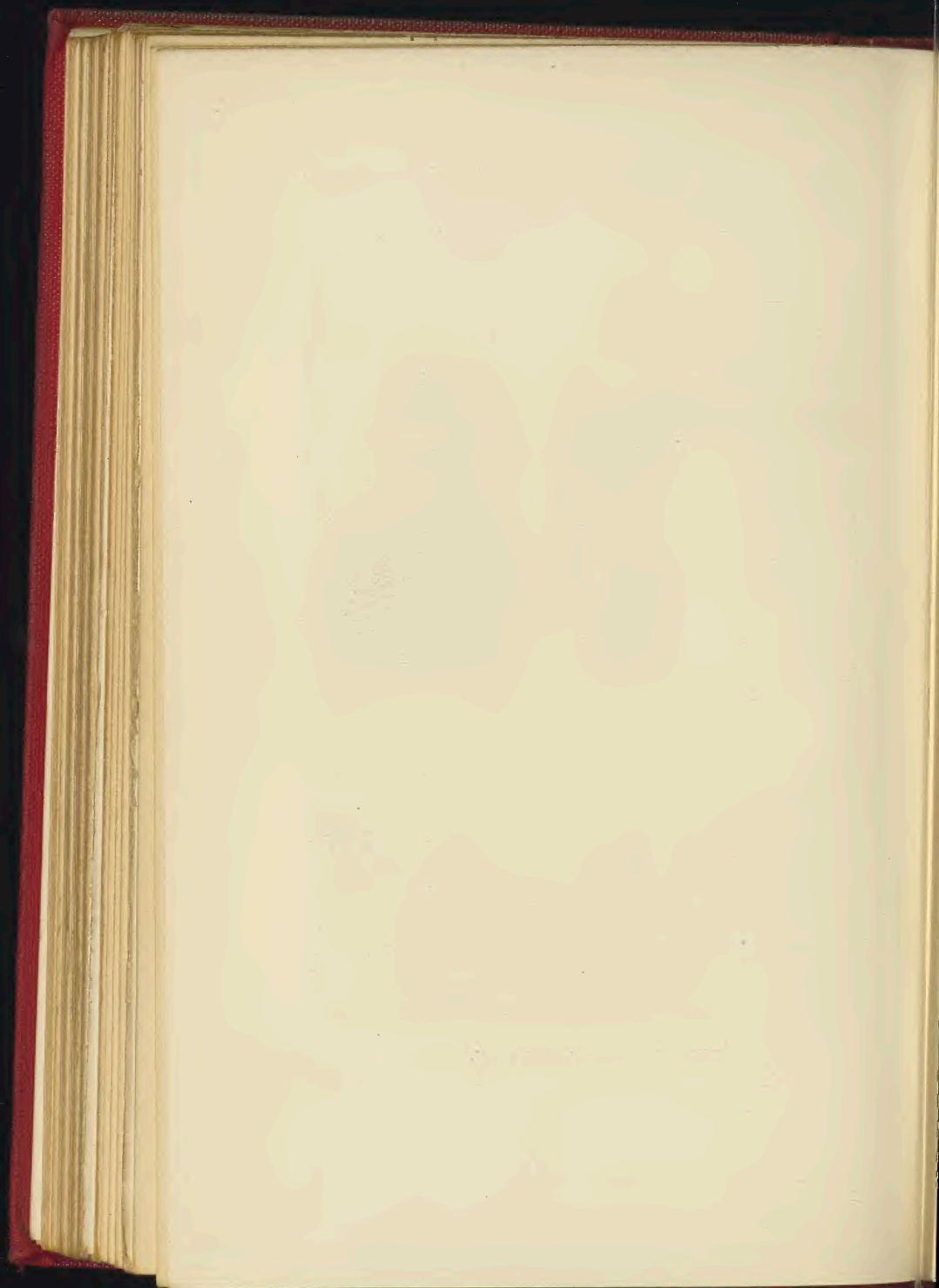
The next point is concerned with the danger of straddling. The harm that this fault does to your play can scarcely be exaggerated. It is a much greater evil than standing with the feet too close together, for, although in the latter case there is always the danger of not keeping a perfect balance, to straddle too much makes pivoting impossible, and destroys all chance of obtaining a steady and unbroken swing.

At this point let me say that, when playing an iron, I always keep the weight of the body evenly distributed. I have pointed out that with the driver, brassy, and cleek, all three distance clubs, the weight, in the up swing, is chiefly on the right leg. But with the iron, which is a club played with a view to accuracy of direction, there is nothing to be gained from the slight sway which I permit myself in playing the distance clubs, and the only object of which is to obtain extra length by using the weight of the body. I always try, therefore, to stand as steady as possible while playing the iron, for I realise that, as I am playing to reach a small and well-defined area, accuracy of aim comes before every other consideration.

The next point is the grip. There is no reason why you should grip as if the club was about to be torn from your hold; but you should grip firmly by all means, even more so with the iron and mashie, than with other clubs, for with them you



THE STANCE FOR THE IRON.



have to get well down to the ball. Many an iron stroke has been spoilt by gripping too loosely, for the iron, being of the turving family, requires a firm grasp, otherwise it is partly wrenched from your hold by the violence with which it bites into the ground.

The reasons why a three-quarter swing only should be employed, are several, but the chief of them is the loft of the club. "It is when we begin to swing a lofted club that trouble starts," wrote someone long ago; and there is more than the usual amount of truth in this statement. The reason why the extent of the swing depends upon the loft of the club is that the fuller the swing, the sharper is the curvature of the club's line of motion. A player with a flat swing has always a difficulty in raising the ball with a wooden club when playing through the green, because the curvature of the swing is not sufficiently abrupt to lift the ball quickly; the ball may be struck perfectly true, but it has a low trajectory. But on the other hand, if we took a full swing with the iron, as we do with the driver, we should obtain height at the expense of distance. We can get a greater distance by shortening the swing, which, being necessarily less of a circular motion, results in a lower trajectory.

This is the chief reason for the three-quarter swing. Another is that, when playing an iron, we do so in order to reach that confined space—the green, which, guarded on all sides—and on up-to-

date courses sometimes in the centre as well !— calls for great precision. With the driver there is not so much need for care about the direction of the stroke, because a pull or slice of a dozen yards is not likely to find trouble. But we cannot afford to make an error of twelve yards or the half of twelve yards either way when playing up to the green. And, therefore, a three-quarter swing is the utmost we can permit ourselves if good direction is to be obtained ; it scarcely requires proof that the further the face of the club is turned away from its original angle, the more difficult it is to bring it back again with perfect accuracy.

The next point to be observed is : Don't force ; and this requires little explanation. Everyone of us is aware that to press is fatal, and yet we often take an iron with the feeling that we shall have to hit one of our very best in order to reach the green. When this feeling comes upon us the safe plan is to put the iron back and take a cleek, which will do away with any temptation to force.

The stance, grip, and length of swing having been decided, I hark back to the position of the arms when addressing the ball. It is a fault to keep them stretched out, for then a correct swing cannot be obtained ; rather should the arms be just free from the sides. The idea regarding the proper position of the arms adopted at the present day is very different from that in vogue, say

twenty years ago, when the beginner was usually advised to keep his arms as far from the body as possible in addressing the ball. There are many things to recommend the modern method, not the least of them being the better control of direction which it gives.

Throughout the up-swing the player should be pivoting from the right hip. While the right leg during this part of the swing should be more or less stationary, the left should swing inwards a little and should be supported for the time on the left toe. When it comes to the down-swing I think there are few golfers who have not something to learn. The majority endeavour to pick the ball up cleanly, but there is a better method than this. Let me picture myself playing an iron shot. I have taken the club back in the manner described; having done so I am going to bring it down, not behind the ball (nor, I trust, on the top), but so as to make the club meet the ball before it has reached the lowest point of the swing. This means that the club is coming down upon the ball at the moment of striking it, and if my swing be correct, a little turf will be taken in front of the ball. But, although it takes ground, the club must not be checked, but must be carried through and upwards.

At this point let me emphasize the necessity of going well through with the iron. Many players swing quite correctly up to the point when the club meets the ball, but there the effort ceases.

You ought always to take the club well through and not check it in any way, otherwise you are robbing yourself of distance you ought to have obtained.

The next thing I would impress upon the inland player is : don't be afraid of hitting, and bear in mind that you can hit without forcing. The player who is under the impression that a lady-like swing is all that is necessary, is making a big mistake, for the iron requires driving, so to speak. I have said elsewhere that if the cleek shot is a swipe, the iron is a punch, but the reader must not confuse the "punch" with the "stab," which is employed when the lie is such that a follow-through is impossible, as for instance, when the ball is found up a drain-pipe, as a professional friend once assured me he found his during the progress of a championship.

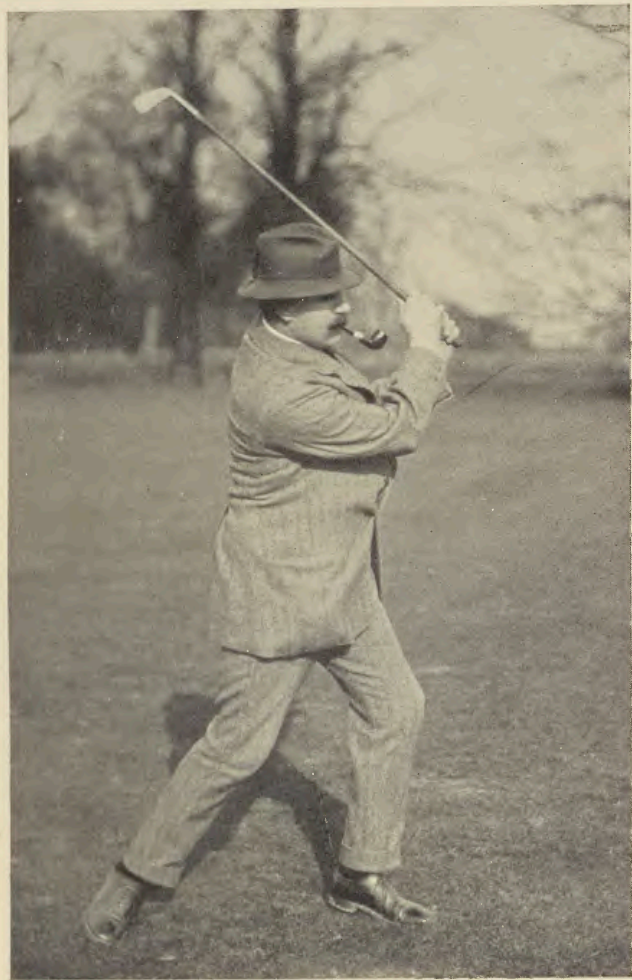
If you have played the stroke correctly you will find that, when the ball has left the club, your weight is on the left leg, which is braced to resist the pressure. The position now is just the reverse of what it was at the top of the swing. The whole process is one of winding up, then unwinding. To throw the weight of your body into the stroke is simply to allow your weight to go on to the left leg ; there again the beginner or even the advanced golfer who is temporarily "off" can perhaps correct a fault, for this transference of the weight prevents the player drawing back the left foot at the moment of striking—a bad error,

inasmuch as it deprives the blow of half the force he had meant to impart.

And finally, trust your club. If a bunker looms in front, it will not be of an height impossible to the iron; your difficulty does not lie in obtaining sufficient altitude, but in preventing a skier, and the height one should obtain with the iron is obviously determined by the hazard in front. If the shot be a plain one there is no necessity to waste distance with a sky scraper; try rather to obtain as low a trajectory as you can. This can be brought about either by standing a little more in front of the ball, or by swinging down straighter, in which case the turf will be taken or grazed in front of the ball as I have described earlier in this chapter. This is by no means an advanced type of stroke, and players trying it should put from them the fear of smothering, for if the club is allowed to go through and up, this cannot happen—at least, not if it is travelling at anything like a decent speed, and if you really desire to obtain a good iron shot your club must not be swung slowly, but should come on to the ball as if you meant business. Gentle methods are of no avail in iron play. You must grip firmly and hit hard. It is of no use to fan the ball, for you are using the club, and you must not leave it to the club's weight to obtain length for you. How often have I heard players remark that strength is not required at golf! All I can

say is that in my experience other things, such as timing and accurate hitting, being equal, the strongest player will obtain the longest ball. But great strength is naturally unavailing if the player be inaccurate, and my advice to the novice who feels that he must slog at all costs, is to drop the idea until he has learnt to hit the ball properly. After that, his strength will stand him in good stead.

The iron and the mashie are the two clubs upon which falls the work of negotiating the tee-shots to the short holes, for in inland golf we are denied the option of playing a 150-yard run up with our putter, as is said to be the ancient and classical method of negotiating the short eleventh at St. Andrews. The only special point about the tee-shot with the iron club, is the question whether a sand tee should be taken or not, and in regard to this there is far from being complete unanimity even amongst the best players. For my own part, I always use a pinch of sand for a tee shot with an iron club just as I do with a wooden club, and although I do not think that this is so necessary on the teeing-grounds of sea-side courses, I do believe that it is a great aid towards accurate hitting on inland tees, not to mention that it is much less severe upon the teeing-ground itself. The truth is simply that, even when you carefully choose a favourable spot on which to place your ball, the inland grass is not sufficiently wiry to sustain the weight of it,



THE IRON : FINISH.



and it sinks more or less into the grass. The sand tee by enabling you to hit the ball more cleanly, at the same time makes it easier for you to hit it with accuracy.

CHAPTER X

TWO WAYS OF APPROACH PLAY

ALL roads lead to the green at last ; but for the short approach the choice lies between the high road and the low road, the cut-back pitch that reaches its destination by way of the air, and the run-up and pitch-and-run, which make all or part of the journey along the ground. Each method is particularly suited to certain circumstances, and each has its devotees who make of it the backbone of their approach play. My own preference is all for the pitch, and I would even go so far as to say that the player on inland courses will seldom find that he has any use for anything else.

To begin with, there are a hundred different difficulties to be reckoned with by the player who prefers to take the low road ; for the pitch there is only one—the wind. And even the wind, to a skilful player, may often become a help rather than a hindrance. A bunker, a lump in the ground, a loose impediment, a tuft of long grass, a patch of soft turf,—any one of these may completely destroy the careful calculations of the man who is playing the pitch-and-run. But these

difficulties of the fairway are altogether absent from the airway that is taken by the cut-back approach. Again, there are occasions when you simply must play the cut-back stroke. The carry over a bunker set into the green can be negotiated in no other way. A plateau green, even without any hazard to guard it, makes a pitch-and-run shot far too dangerous, although it does not necessarily exclude the pure run-up. On the other hand, no circumstances that you are ever likely to meet with on an inland course will make the cut-back pitch impossible. It will pay the inland player, therefore, to devote himself to perfect his mashie pitches.

At the same time, let it be confessed that there is no shot in the whole game which is more difficult for the beginner to acquire properly. For one thing, there is nearly always trouble lying in wait for a missed stroke, and when our mind is working furiously, and our imagination conjuring up an impossible lie in the bunker and a resultant 8 or 9, it does not make the shot any simpler. At the present time our inland greens are so encompassed about with pitfalls that the work of the mashie is always a test of nerve as well as skill. Nor is it always the bunkers immediately in front, or those at the sides that cause us to offer up a prayer; there is usually also the rearguard of the sandy army lying in wait for the stroke that is played a little too strong, and in such a case you must put enough

back-spin on the ball to make it draw up promptly or else perish in the attempt. With the gutta it was a simple matter to put stop on the ball, for the ball itself assisted the player; but in these bouncing times and keen greens the difficulty is much greater. The greens at St. Andrews—to take a good example—are not suited to the player who prefers to pitch boldly, and this is the reason why the local players essay the running-up stroke; but put a St. Andrews' player on one of our sticky inland courses—one of those where watercress can be gathered daily—and let him attempt his favourite stroke! It can't be done. For this reason the inland golfer has usually a greater command of a useful shot. We have many things to contend against in our wanderings amidst hedges and trees, but there is no doubt whatever that the inland course teaches us to make a friend of the mashie. There is nothing more soul-satisfying than to see our ball flying over an intervening hazard, in the direction of the flag; and in this direction I cannot but regret the tendency to do away with the cross hazard, and I find great cause for satisfaction in the way in which the pendulum has begun to swing back again. The cross hazards so much in vogue twenty years ago are again making their appearance on our inland courses, though not quite in their original form, for in the construction of hazards we have made vast strides since the days of the gutta.

I think it is generally known that I prefer to take my niblick for any distance up to 120 yards ; but for longer shots, rather than press with my old friend, I take out my mashie. The mashie is a club no golfer can afford to ignore ; he can discard others when forced to carry his own bag, but the mashie is a member of the team every time.

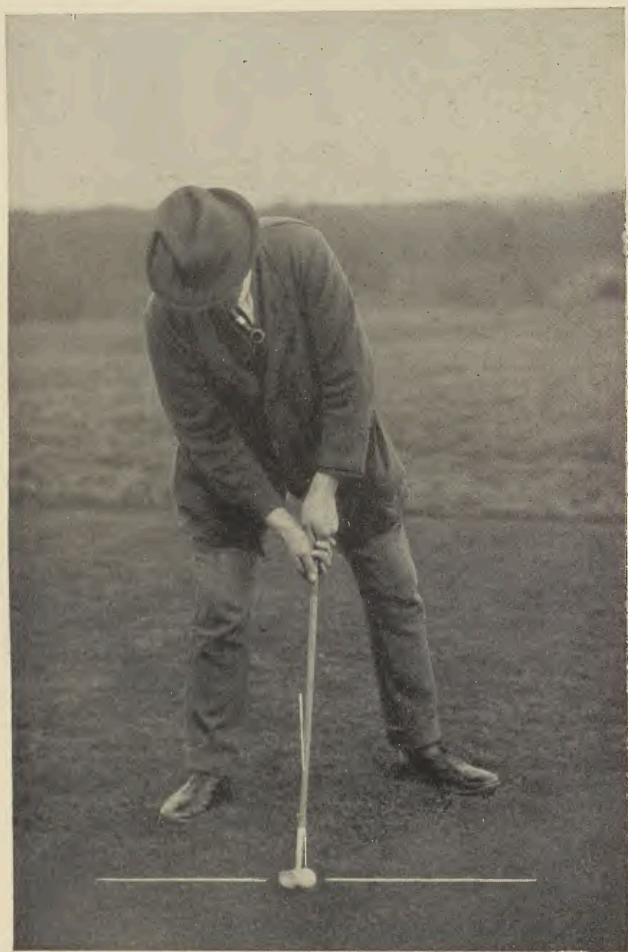
With the misuses of the club we are all painfully familiar ; for socketing, pulling, topping, duffing, and other deadly sins seem to regard the mashie shot as their special opportunity. Possibly the explanation of the mashie's long career of crime lies in the fact that the head is of a size that calls for more than an average amount of accuracy, and for that very reason there is no club with which confidence is more desirable and at the same time more difficult. As a short cut to success we are offered the services of the socketless type of club. But a fault remains a fault, whatever the club employed, and though the socketless mashie may prevent disaster, it cannot turn a bad stroke into a good one, or enable the golfer to play his pitches with accuracy off the heel of his club. And in any case it is far better and far more sportsmanlike to eradicate the fault in ourselves than to use a club that pretends to offer a short cut to proficiency.

And now let me explain how the difficulties of the mashie approach are to be overcome. The grip does not differ in any respect from that

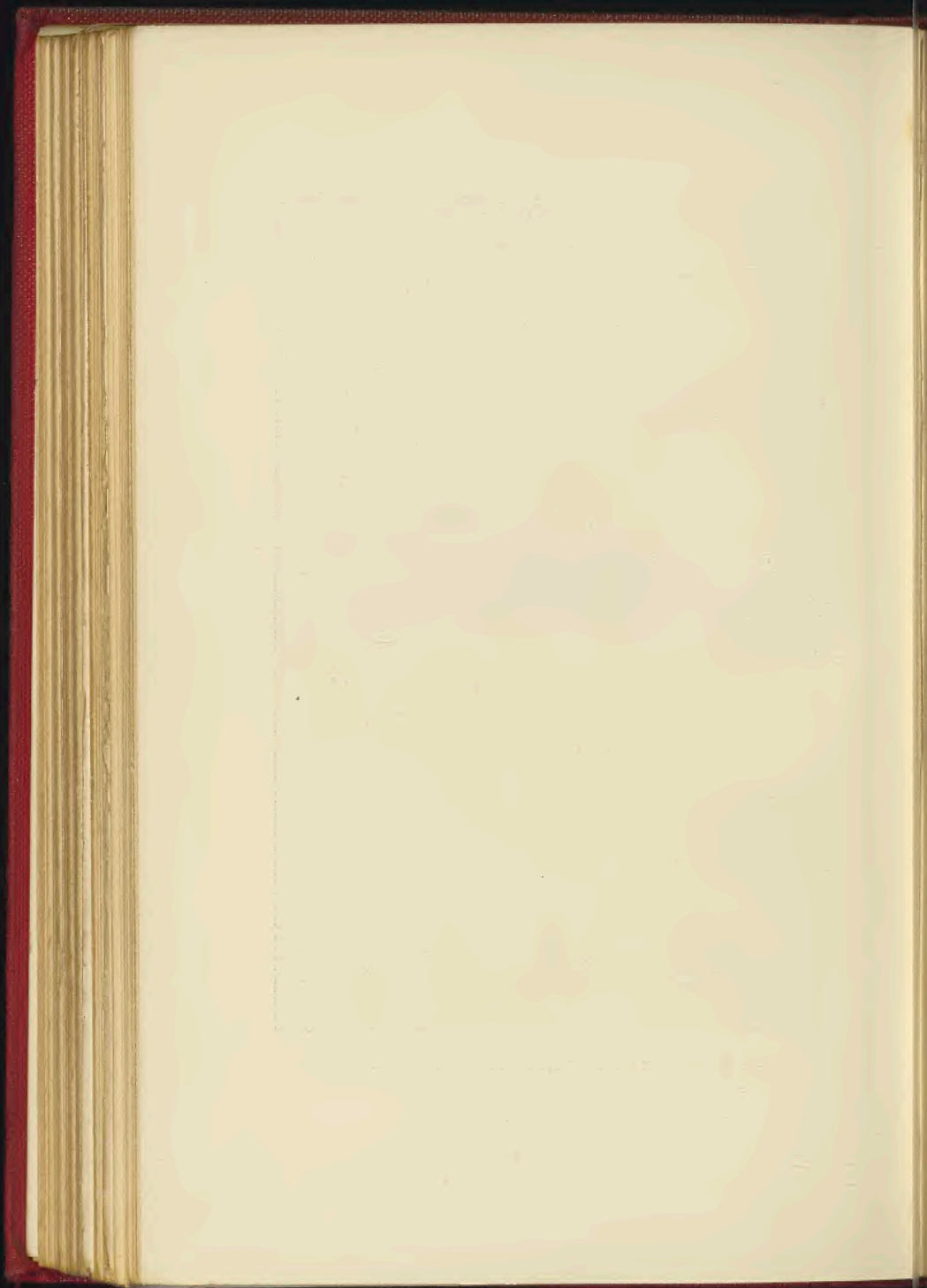
used for the other strokes, but more than ever you must be careful to grip firmly, otherwise you are inviting trouble, should the club bite deep, for it will twist in your hands. The stance is the same as for the iron, only more so; that is to say, it is more open than ever, the right foot being advanced until it is about fifteen inches in front of the left. The weight of the body is more on the right foot than the left. The position of the ball depends to a great extent on the length of stroke required, but for a full mashie, the ball should be in a line with the left heel. When taking up your stance, get the feeling that you are standing firmly but not rigidly. In order to be able to twist easily in swinging, your knees should be a little bent. To keep them stiff is a common fault with many players, and we can always notice this, even at a distance, by the awkward manner in which they play the stroke.

In addressing the ball see that the blade is a little turned out. At first sight this would appear as if the player were deliberately attempting a slice, but the result will prove otherwise. If the blade is held in a natural position, the odds are that you will pull, owing to the way in which, in the downward swing, the club travels across the line of flight.

The right elbow should brush against the side, and at no part of the swing should it be allowed to leave the side to any great extent. This apparently cramped method is all for the sake of greater



THE STANCE FOR THE NIBLICK APPROACH.



accuracy, because you cannot afford to take liberties with a club that has no great amount of hitting face. With the arms well in, there should be no fear of socketing, for when this fault occurs it has almost invariably been brought about by pushing the club out in the forward swing. Bear in mind that the club must be taken back straight for a few inches before being allowed to go up, and brought forward slightly across the body. It is plain that this can easily be done when we remember that in the stance for a mashie shot the body is half-facing the hole to begin with.

A very important thing in mashie play is the bending of the left knee when taking the club back, for if this is not done, but the left knee kept almost rigid, great difficulty will be found in preventing a "push-out" a result that has the same effect as a socketed stroke, although as a matter of fact, the ball has been struck in the centre of the club. If the left knee is kept rigid, and not allowed to "knuckle in," you cannot bring the club across the body; the left elbow goes out, and naturally, the ball is played to mid-off.

If players will only try it for themselves they will quickly prove the truth of my contention, that the bending of the left knee enables the club to be brought through in the correct manner.

Naturally, if a very short stroke is required, there is not so much necessity either to swing the knees, or to raise the left heel; in fact it is better to keep both heels flat on the ground. "Steady

on your feet " and " Head still," are too golden rules for short mashie play, especially the latter, for more golfing crimes are due to neglect of it than of any other. It is undoubtedly a difficult matter to resist the inclination to lift one's head quickly in order to see the result of the stroke, but he who does it has not far to walk before playing his next stroke. For the success of the shot, therefore, you should continue to gaze at the spot even after the ball has left, to ensure that the head should not be raised too soon.

This brings to my mind an ex-Yorkshire champion, who, a victim to this head-lifting, gave his caddie instructions always to say " keep your head still " when he was addressing the ball. He also said it himself, and every time he played a stroke, the whole vicinity could hear that dismal chant.

Perhaps the commonest of all common faults, so far as the incomplete golfer is concerned, is the striving after loft. The idea seems to be that it rests entirely with the player whether the ball is going to be raised or not ; to this end, therefore, he drops the right shoulder in bringing the club down. In fact the right side seems to collapse altogether. When this occurs, there can only be one result : the club, owing to the dropping down of the shoulder, must obviously reach its lowest level some few inches behind the ball, and a missed stroke is the outcome. If the player would only realise that the mashie is made with a large angle

of loft for the specific purpose of raising the ball, and would put his trust in it more, there would be no necessity to point out this fault. Give your attention to the swing and leave the rest to the club ; it will not fail you.

When we take the mashie for a distance of about 120 yards, we do so after first fixing in our mind the spot on which we are going to try and pitch. On inland courses we are naturally guided by the nature of the ground short of the hole, and it is invariably several yards nearer to the pin than would be the case on the ordinary seaside course, for we know our inland turf and its ball-stopping propensities, and experience teaches us that it is far better to pitch boldly up to the hole.

At the longer distances it does not do to be too exacting, but for any stroke up to 80 yards you should be able to impart sufficient stop to the ball to bring it to rest within a few yards of where it pitches. In playing this stroke, the stance must be altered a little ; you must now stand more behind the ball, with the right foot still further advanced, so that the body is turned more towards the hole. In taking the club back you must push it farther out, so that on its downward journey it naturally travels across the body, striking the ball a glancing blow. The effect of thus swinging across, is seen in the quickness with which the ball gets up. Its legs are cut from underneath it, so to speak, and a spin imparted that, when it comes

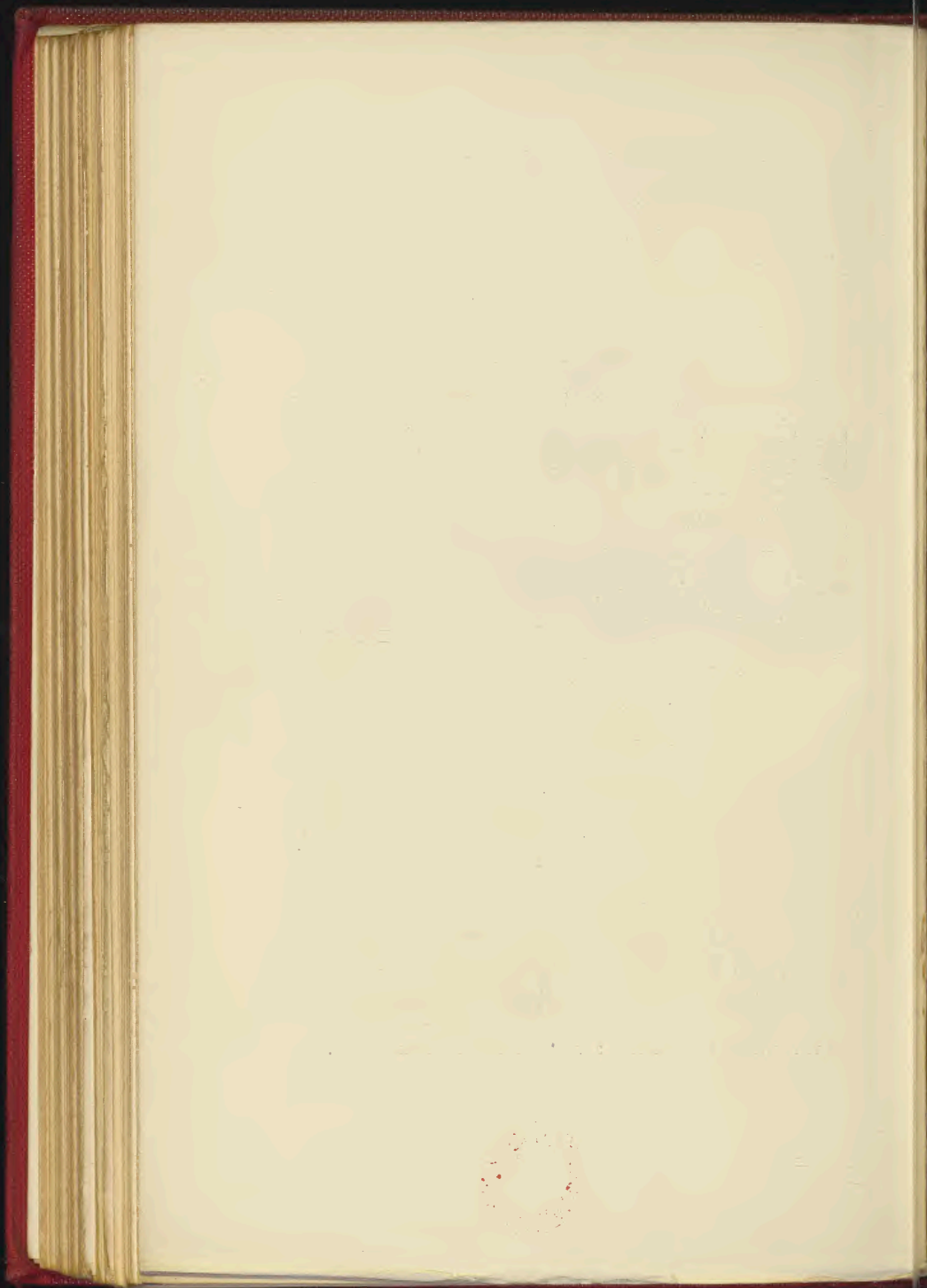
to earth again, will prevent it careering across the green into the "back of beyond." When bringing the club through, the left arm should be allowed to go out to its fullest extent, and not checked.

The great difficulty of most players is that they are afraid of going too far, but the essence of good mashie play is boldness of execution. Naturally, on a seaside course one allows for a little run, but this is a negligible quantity on those inland courses where we play the stroke and, coming up to the ball, draw our opponent's attention to the fact that a lump of mud is adhering to it. Aim at the pin in mashie play. And do not fail to notice that, as our inland greens are not naked as of yore, the hazards, to left and right, are excellent aids to accurate judgment of distance.

And now as to faults. The common failing is socketing; but it is easily remedied. The reason you fall into it usually is that, in taking the club back, you have brought it too much round the right leg. There is no chance during the down swing to rectify the fault, and the club comes through "pushed out"; that is to say, instead of coming through a shade to the left of the line of play, it is to the right; and this naturally brings the heel of the club up against the ball. If you stand too close the same thing occurs; but I am inclined to the belief that a bad attack of socketing is usually due to taking



THE NIBLICK APPROACH : AT THE TOP OF THE SWING.



the club back in the faulty manner I have described.

The half-topped approach is due to no other cause than raising the head, which is the same thing as raising the body up too soon from its stooping position. I have referred to the tendency to pull with a full mashie, and many do this without knowing why. The reason is that, as the mashie travels across the body, the toe of the club comes over quickly ; and this is explained by the fact that the longer a shot we play with the mashie, the more does the right hand turn over the left in coming through. In a short pitch of twenty yards or so, there is no appreciable difference in the position of the hands either before or after the stroke. But for a pitch of six times that distance, you are almost certain to pull to a greater or less extent, unless you turn the blade out in addressing the ball, so as to allow for the toe of the club coming over.

Let me suggest that for inland golf the blade of the mashie should be deep ; not too much so, but of a sufficient depth to guard against the probability of going underneath the ball when in our usual hazard—long grass. This long-grass stroke is the shot that we are constantly called upon to negotiate, and here, I think, I can offer the player good advice. When the ball is lying snug, a polite manner of describing the usual shot we get, stand a trifle more in advance, so that, instead of the ball being in a line with the left heel,



it is now nearer the right. The reason for this change of stance is that you want to come down on the ball more, not on the top, of course, but exactly behind it, for there is no need to waste your strength in cutting through six inches of good, tough inland grass before hitting the ball. In a bunker you naturally aim a little behind ; but the resisting power of long grass is such that it does not pay to carve a way to the ball. The person who takes his mashie and remarks : " Now for a brute force and ignorance stroke," is making a mountain of a molehill, for, unless the ball be buried, a sharp stroke immediately behind it is all that is necessary, and there is no need for him to burst himself. You cannot take liberties with a mashie any more than with a niblick, for you have to play both with care ; therefore resist the desire to slog, and see that you never overswing. Remember that you have the iron in your bag ; better, far, an easy iron than a slam with a small headed club. Keep 120 yards in your mind as the limit of its power and yours, and you won't so often have cause to bemoan " another off the shank."

I should not be far wrong in describing the true run-up stroke as purely Scottish, for, though it is played almost universally, yet South of the Tweed it is not so popular as the shot that is well pitched up. Formerly the run-up was played with the club known as the " Musselburgh Iron," which is to say, with nothing more or less than a



THE NIBLICK APPROACH : FINISH.



wooden putter, in whose place the mashie now finds most favour. What the wooden putter is capable of, however, I had a good chance of judging on one occasion at St. Andrews, where I saw Mr. W. H. Fowler use it to place his ball on the eleventh green with an ease that excited feelings of envy in the minds of those who lacked the courage to put their trust in anything but the well tossed-up mashie shot.

It must not be forgotten that the harder turf of long-established courses lends itself to the run-up type of stroke. There are few holes at St. Andrews where it cannot be played, and the native who has known the run of the ground from early childhood, can leave his ball close to the hole time after time. But the form of the stroke that hugs the ground all the time is of very little use on youthful inland courses, over which another fifty years must pass before the approaches lend themselves to such work. Therefore, the form of run-up played in inland golf is properly, speaking, a pitch-and-run—a pitch with a low trajectory for half the distance and a problematical run afterwards.

On inland courses to run-up is to run the risk of seeing the ball deflected or stopped by an unforeseen obstacle in the form of dried worm-casts, an unkindly slope, or a soft patch of turf. Whatever be the nature of the trouble, the stroke is ruined, and the player left lamenting the fact that he did not pitch it. On the other hand, I will

confess that if you are forty yards from the hole and a strong wind is sweeping across the green, it takes a lot of courage to pitch, and the run-up, which is certainly a wind-cheater, appeals more to the average player.

There is another phase of the stroke which is worthy of consideration. I refer now to the judging of distance. Mr. John L. Low, for instance, who, it must not be forgotten, is a player who would sooner run than pitch, thinks that, with the run-up it is easier to judge the distance. "The player," he says, "has not to take into account the arc which the ball will take in its flight; he has only to think of the power necessary to send it in an almost straight line to the hole." This seems good, sound reasoning, so far as it goes, but then again, we are faced with the opinions of other good players, such as J. H. Taylor, who find it easier to gauge the distance with the pitch.

It seems that opinions are fairly evenly divided on the matter, and, as I have said, I am in the camp of the pitchers. One thing seems fairly certain; the man who can pitch well finds comparatively little difficulty in playing the run-up when the occasion demands it, but the player who is a confirmed runner-up is often found wanting when a bunker intervenes between him and the hole. Therefore I would suggest that you learn to pitch first and the other stroke will come easier to you.

The great thing in playing the run-up is to see

that you do not pass the blade of the club too much underneath the ball. We are all familiar with the topped approach which runs on to come to rest near the hole. In this case, the player has, quite accidentally, brought off a perfect run-up, for he has imparted to the ball that overspin which, without being absolutely necessary, is nevertheless a great element in the success of the run-up stroke. This over-spin can be obtained deliberately, by turning the right hand over the left as the club strikes the ball, with the result that at the finish of the swing the shaft is pointing towards the hole with the toe of the blade towards the skies. The most essential thing is, that the blade of the club must meet the ball without there having been any bending of the wrists. The stroke is really a push with the wrists stiff.

The stance that you should employ for the run-up is still the open. The ball should be in a line with the left heel, and in addressing the ball, —at least if you are using a mashie—the hands should be in advance of the club head, in order to reduce the loft of the club. If you play the stroke with a mashie-iron or any club with less loft than the mashie, there is not so much necessity for keeping the hands advanced, but it is better to err on the side of too little loft than of too much. Before making the stroke the player should endeavour to fix in his mind the spot whereon he intends that the ball should pitch, instead of

just glancing at the flag and then playing the stroke on what the Yankee called general principles.

For a shot of any distance up to forty yards, I do not think that the body should move at all; the stroke should be played entirely with the arms, for in the effort of moving the body forward with the stroke the blade is apt to be pushed under the ball to an extent that is productive of no run. Keep the body still therefore, and aim at the ball, for if the club bites into the turf in the slightest degree before the ball is struck all your calculations regarding the distance will go by the board.

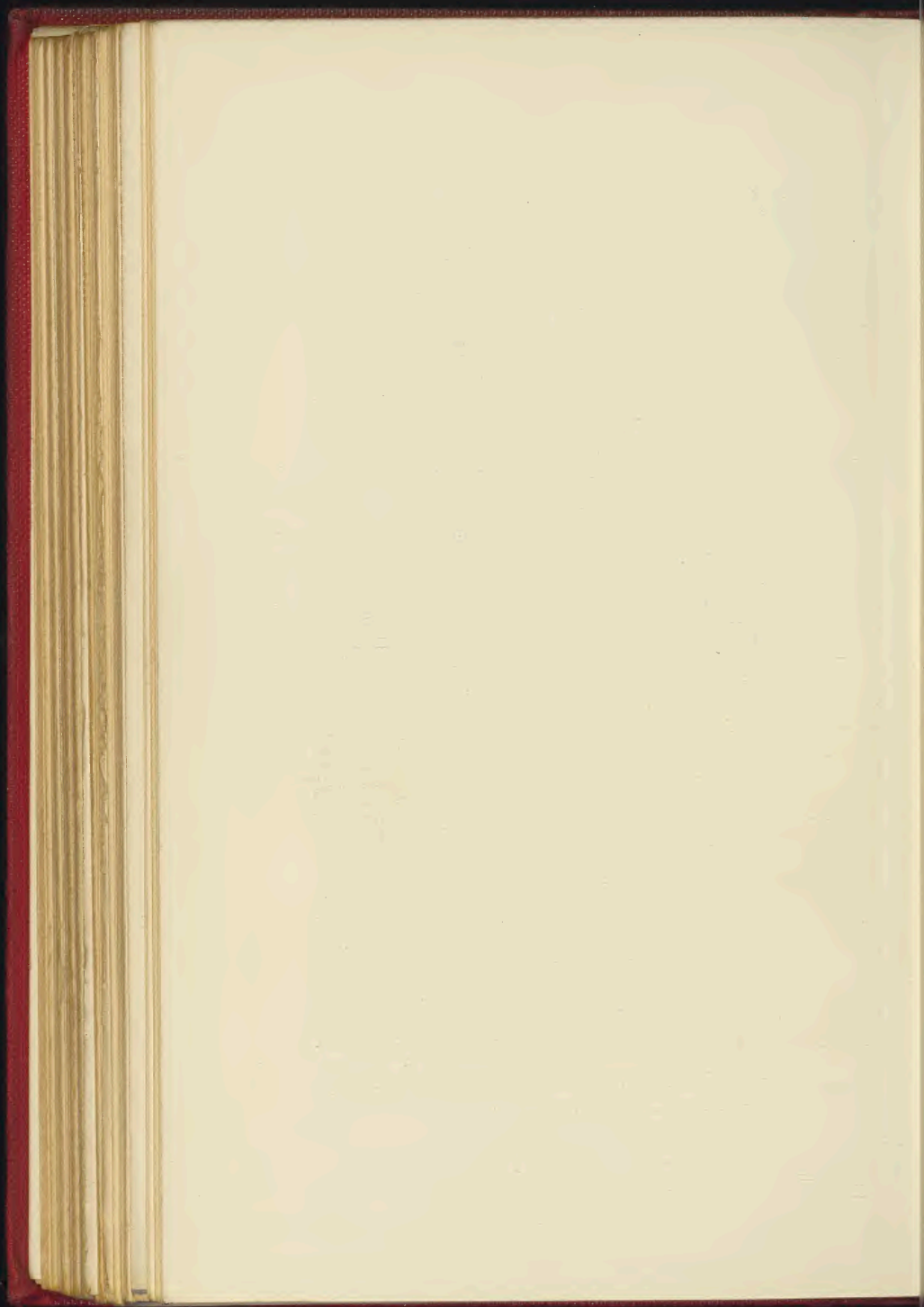
As far as the actual swing is concerned the left hand plays the most important part; with it you drag the club through. If you let it go well through with the arms outstretched, you will obviate any tendency to raise the ball too quickly. Bear in mind then that any flexion of the wrist is fatal, and that to draw the club across the ball is no less so, for by so doing you impart to the ball a cut that will deprive it of all run.

The run-up is by no means an advanced type of stroke, for by the application of the few simple hints that I have given, any player can bring it off successfully and experience combined with local knowledge can alone teach him to judge the strength of the intervening turf. Don't be too anxious to see the success of the stroke, otherwise you will be likely to take your eye off the ball too soon



THE FINISH OF THE RUN-UP SHOT WITH THE IRON.

Note the turning over of the right wrist.



TWO WAYS OF APPROACH PLAY 107

and the result will put your opponent on good terms with himself.

I have touched on the run-up more briefly than I might have done, because for my own part I seldom pay the stroke, and I believe that unless there is an howling gale blowing across the line of play, you will do better to pitch with your mashie or niblick. If you will pardon an Irishism, it's the cut back shot which pays in the long run.

CHAPTER XI

THE VERSATILE NIBLICK

THE niblick, which is the last court of appeal for golfers in general is, of all clubs my favourite. In time of trouble it is by the niblick that our pardonable feeling of pessimism is dispelled, and we emerge from a yawning cavern with the information that we have never experienced a worse lie than that from which our faithful weapon has just extricated us. To all of which our opponent, who has been seeing visions, turns a deaf ear, convinced as he is that the lie in the bunker was not the only one.

The niblick is a club that is generally used when we are close to the green ; but lucky is the man who has no occasion to call upon it en route, for grass, long and rank, a sandy abyss or two, the deep divot mark of some ass that has gone before, a dirty ditch—called a babbling brook by the player who has cleared it—and countless other pitfalls, lie in wait for the erratic player ; and any of those may bring from our bag the last resource. "Stand clear !" remarks the player, as, with puckered brows and clenched teeth, and a "do or die" expression he hurls his niblick

underneath the ball. The ball emerges in a cloud of soil, the opponent exclaims "Well out!" and the player remarks "Couldn't have done much more!" But the club that has saved him is seldom regarded with the gratitude it deserves.

I have testified to the fact that the niblick is my favourite club, but I confess that this is not so much because it brings me back to the straight path, as because I have got into the habit of pressing it into service for playing my approaches. My memory brings back many strokes in which it has performed nobly, but above all others I place one that "came off" at Muirfield last June. Having pushed my drive out at the tenth hole, I debated long whether I ought to take out my mashie. There was a bunker some considerable distance ahead, and the lie was not good; but that silent whisper was more than I could resist, and it was my old friend that put the ball on the green. You, who never take a niblick except when the ball is fathoms deep, so to speak, should try it some time when pitching on to a keen green; and if you play the shot correctly you will not be disappointed.

Naturally when you are about to use the niblick as an extricator the stance you must take up is determined by the position of the ball, but when you take it for a short approach, there is no difference as regards stance, grip, and the position of the ball, between the method of playing this club and the method of playing the mashie. The

one factor that you have to consider is the loft, which is much more pronounced than in the case of the mashie. The greater loft makes it necessary in using the niblick, to put more power into the stroke, for a portion of our energy is inevitably wasted in sending the ball into the air, and it naturally follows that more force is necessary; in fact, the player should tell himself that he has to hit the ball half as hard again as he would if using the mashie for a stroke of the same distance. The reader may not unnaturally ask: Why then use a niblick at all for approaching, when we have the mashie, a club built for the purpose? To this I would reply that we often find ourselves approaching a green from such an angle that the disposition of the bunkers leaves us without much space whereon to pitch. In such a case it is necessary to make the ball draw up quickly if we would escape the hazards beyond the green. The niblick does naturally and easily what the player himself would have to do if he were using a mashie, that is, impart a bottom spin to the ball. With the niblick there is no necessity to lay yourself out for cut; the loft of the club will do all that is necessary. But you must remember to play the club boldly; in fact the one thing necessary to a player who prefers to play a short approach with a niblick is confidence. Of course that is an asset that is of value for every stroke in the game, but especially so when we use the niblick for any

distance up to eighty yards, with a bunker guarding the approach, for it is only by hitting the ball boldly that we can avoid the danger of half topping. We see the trouble in front, and realise that we are between the devil and the deep sea ; for if we fail to get well down, the ball will leave the club with too low a trajectory to clear the hazard, while on the other hand should the trajectory be of a sufficient height to carry the bunker, the ball may go scurrying across the green. The fear of falling into one error often drives the inexperienced player into the other ; hence my remark that confidence in oneself is so essential. I think that is all that need be said in regard to the use of the niblick for approaching. Don't overswing, hit the ball hard, and there need be no fear of over-running the hole.

With the advent of the most modern of inland hazards—known to the green keeper as “ broken ground,” but to the player by a variety of descriptions a great deal more forceful—the niblick has at last come into its own. Amongst those grassy hills, we usually find ourselves tucked up under a tuft of one or other of the exotic grasses beloved of our greenkeeper botanist. With one foot in the air and the ball beneath us, there is only one shot that is likely to be of any use, and that is the shot that is tossed well up with a niblick.

When the ball is lying behind one of these

grassy ramparts, and it is necessary to raise it quickly, the following hints as to the best method of playing the stroke ought, I think to prove useful. Instead of standing as you would for an ordinary approach, you must now keep the left foot farther back, with the result of making the body face more towards the hole. You are apparently aiming too much to the left, but, this is compensated for by the fact that the blade of the club should be turned out slightly. In taking the club back, see that you push it out a trifle and lift it straighter up, for a flat curve is no use whatever. There is no need to take the club back over your shoulder for any stroke with a niblick; rather check the swing as much as possible. When bringing the club down let it come sharply across the ball; the fact that the left foot is well back enables you to do this easily, and the result will be seen in the quickness with which the ball rises off the club. Take a little turf if you prefer to do so, but having done so—replace it.

I should, perhaps, explain that my own niblick is shaped rather differently from the ordinary type, being longer in the face; and I may be pardoned for saying that I have proved this to be no disadvantage. The chief argument against a long-headed club is, that the resistance of the rough must be greater, but while this appears to be sound enough reasoning, I think the difference is so trifling as to matter very little. The day of

the small circular head has departed, and a good thing too, for it was a blot on our set. Really, there is nowadays no necessity for a small-headed club; the atrocious lies of story and song exist only in the imagination of the unfortunate when things go wrong. And the small head calls for too great an accuracy on the part of the player.

In playing from rough grass, the fault of most players is that they handicap themselves by mowing a swath before reaching the ball. There is no necessity to do anything of the kind. There is no reason why the player should expend his force in coming through eight inches of grass behind the ball when one is sufficient. And yet we find players who always seem to take a fiendish delight in removing a divot that blots out the sun! Naturally, we do sometimes meet with a lie calling for stern measures, and then we can only grip tight, keep our eye carefully on as much as we can see of the ball, and trust to providence, at the same time calling all the gods and our opponent to witness that our luck is out and the lie utterly undeserved.

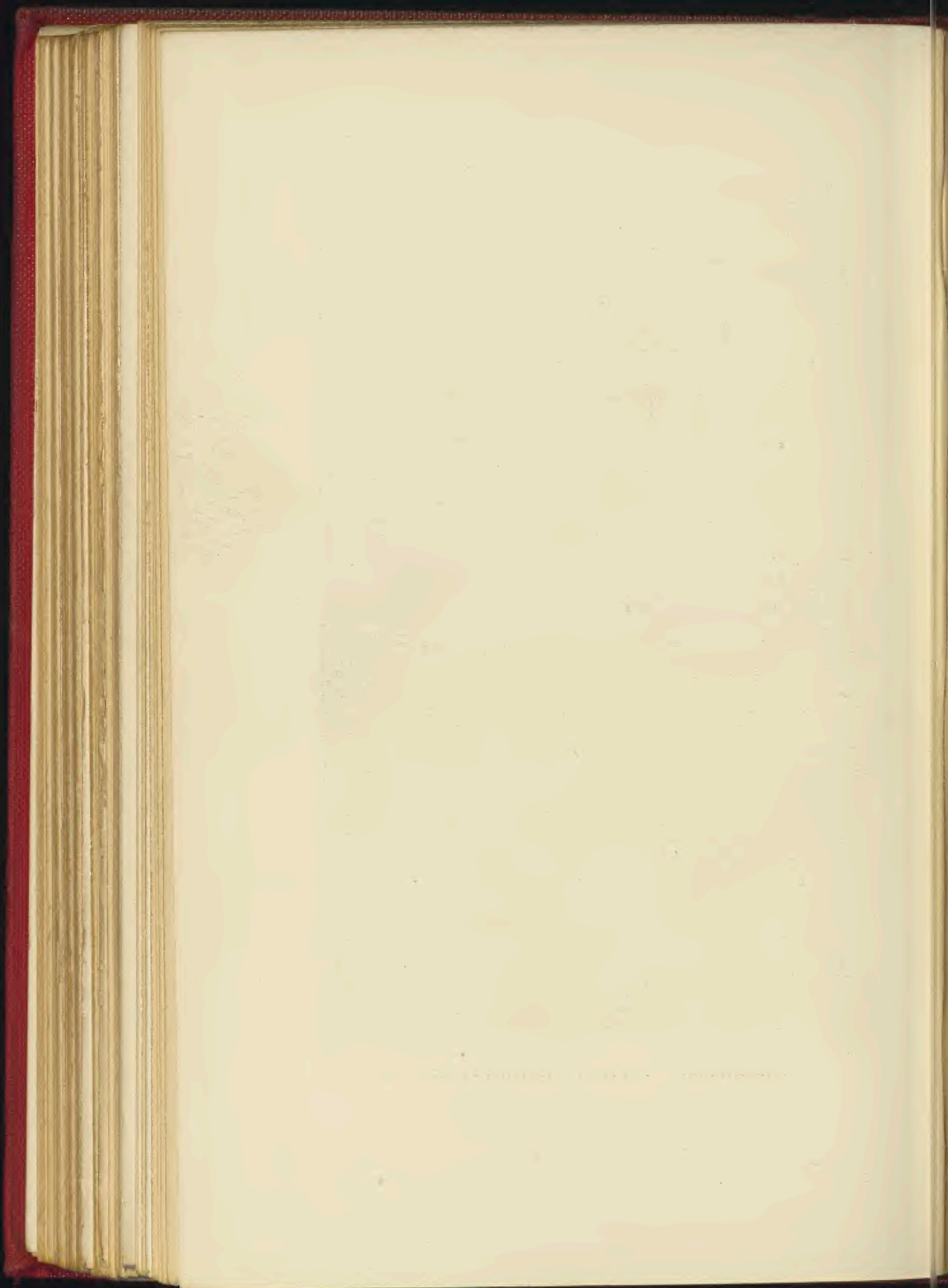
There is one other stroke for which the niblick is peculiarly adapted, and that is for negotiating a stymie. Where there is plenty of room to pitch-and-run, the mashie is quite in order, but the stymies we are usually confronted with are those where little margin is left for a run, and in such cases the niblick is of the greatest possible service, for only with it can we obtain the lazy

lob type of stroke which holds out the best hope of success. An amateur once tried to convince me that it was a simple matter to negotiate a stymie when the intervening ball was on the lip of the hole. He was prepared to back himself to bring it off five times out of six, but as he was trying to convince me of this from a distance of two hundred miles, I did not have the pleasure of drawing his money. The stymie in which one ball is on the lip, is best left alone (unless, indeed, you are left with that stroke for the half, in which case there is nothing for it but to make a desperate effort) because there is such a thing as putting the other fellow in.

You will see that the greater part of these remarks are by way of an appeal for a greater appreciation of the niblick. Make a friend of it, and I have good hope you will find it a useful club for short approaches on our inland courses. With its uses in circumstances more desperate, I hope that you may all have as little acquaintance as possible.



THE NIBLICK : LOFTING OVER A STYMIE.



CHAPTER XII

THE NEGOTIATION OF INLAND HAZARDS

I THINK it is Mr. A. J. Balfour who somewhere relates a tale of a novice who wrote to a friend announcing that he had taken up golf, had purchased the necessary implements and joined a club, and *had hired a bunker for his own exclusive use*. That player had the root of the matter in him. For is it not true that it is the hazards which make the course? The great bunkers guarding such and such a green, and the sand-hills to be carried from such another tee, are the photographers' only joy, while in the reporters' account of a battle between two ex-champions, the bunkers furnish the only incidents to give local colour to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative. And for the golfer himself, it is the hazards which make or mar his score.

The inland golfer has, as a rule, to deal with a much greater variety of obstacles than his seaside brother, as witness the famous shot which Mr. C. H. Alison played from the roof of the clubhouse at Woking, in the University match of 1904, halving the eighteenth hole thereby, and the scarcely less brilliant recovery which Mr. "Bobby"

Andrew made from a precarious perch upon the top of a barrel, in a certain Scottish foursome tournament at Burntisland. Such hazards as trees, hedges, and walls, if they are more picturesque than the ubiquitous sand-bunker, also call for much greater resource when it comes to the negotiating of them. To be sure, even on inland courses sand-bunkers, natural or artificial, usually form the chief part of the scheme of hazards. But on an inland course the bunkers, though they may be filled with the most expensive of sea-sand, are never the same thing as the genuine seaside article.

To begin with, whether it be something in the air of cities that causes the change, or whether the coarser grit of the native soil mingles sooner or later with the alien blend, it is always noticeable that the sand of inland bunkers is never so soft and fine as by the sea. As a result the ball does not sink into it so readily, nor does it offer such a dead resistance to the club, both of which things make the work of recovery a great deal more simple. And let me here remark that one piece of advice with regard to playing out of bunkers which seems to me to have been greatly overdone, is that which enjoins upon the player the wisdom of confining his energies to making sure of getting clear. It is true enough that this should be the foremost consideration, but once a golfer has passed his novitiate he must learn to do a great deal more than that. The lively

rubber-cored ball has made the task of recovering from all sorts of difficulties a far easier one than it was in the days of the gutta. And when, for instance, the ball is lying fairly on top of a patch of smooth sand in a bunker and is not awkwardly close to the bank in front, there is no reason why the player should not obtain almost as much distance as if he were playing off turf. Undoubtedly the great secret of bunker play is to get well down to the ball. But this axiom must be interpreted with common sense. Sometimes the ball is lying so well even in the bunker that it is quite unnecessary to take sand at all. Experience and practice are the player's best mentors in this respect, and the man who will for a few hours imitate the excellent example of the gentleman who hired the bunker for his private use, will find an ample reward for his trouble in after games.

One special word of warning I may address to the player on inland courses. It often happens that where artificial bunkers are constructed, the sand which is their chief beauty, is like beauty elsewhere, no more than skin deep. And the sanguine player who drives his niblick well into the sand behind the ball with the intention of exploding it on to the adjacent green, is liable sometimes to find the club-head brought up with a most unpleasant jar against the clay bed an inch or two below the surface, to the complete discomfiture of his good intentions. It is an excellent thing to know your bunkers.

But, after all, sand bunkers are, in the main, the same all the world over. It is not of these that I wish to speak so much, as of those difficulties which are the special monopoly of the inland course. I turn, therefore, to that most picturesque and most typically inland of all hazards, timber in the raw state. And I begin right away by saying that there is only one means of negotiating this kind of difficulty, and that is by steering clear of it altogether. Only the inexperienced player lets fly at the tree with the idea that his ball may have the luck to force a way through the thin foliage near the top. To be sure it *may* do so—on one occasion out of a hundred. But the power of the most delicate of twigs to break the force of the most powerful of drives, is such as would not be believed by any one who had not experienced it. Let me add also that it is useless to try to play below the spreading lower branches unless your ball is lying practically underneath them to start with. Golfers seldom realise how very rapidly the modern rubber ball rises off the face of the club, but it will soon be brought home to them, when they try to play a low shot under a greenwood bough that is more than a few feet in front of the ball.

When a player is stymied by one of the monarchs of the forest, there are two courses open to him. He can simply play to one side or the other, submitting to such loss of distance or position,



THE INTENTIONAL SLICE WITH THE BRASSY: THE FINISH.



NEGOTIATION OF INLAND HAZARDS 119

and risks of a bad lie as such a course involves ; or if his game is sufficiently advanced, he can slice or pull round the tree. If the obstacle is not exactly dead in the line, one or other of these spins may be obviously the easier ; if a pull will obviously involve a smaller amount of departure from that straight line which Euclid declared to be the shortest distance between two points, then a pull is the shot to play, but other things being equal, a slice is usually both surer and easier to play.

It must be remembered, also, that a sliced ball is naturally a high one, while a pull in the ordinary way goes with a low shot. Accordingly, if the player is close under the tree and stymied by the trunk, it will usually be better to pull round it, standing with the left foot closer in towards the ball and turning the right wrist over at the moment of hitting, so as to start the ball upon its journey with as low a flight as possible. But if the player is some distance away from the tree and there is no object in a low ball, it is easier to get round it by a slice. Because, as palm trees are not indigenous to these islands, the higher parts of the trees we have to circumvent do not usually spread out so far as do the lower ones. Therefore, the deviation from the straight line does not require to be nearly so great with a high shot as with a low one. And as I have already said, the high ball and the slice are designed by nature to go together. It is not to be forgotten,

either, that the average golfer finds it come a great deal more easily to him to play with slice than with pull.

Two other inland hazards which may be taken together are hedges and walls. These only call for a special kind of stroke when the ball is so close up to them that there is difficulty in getting the ball to rise quickly enough to clear them.

Now it is just here that the majority of people come to grief. They take the obvious and natural way of increasing the loft of the club, by standing further behind the ball, so that in addressing it, the shaft of the club is sloping forward as well as outward, and the club-face is laid back to a corresponding extent. But while this plan is perfectly successful in increasing what I may term the effective loft of the club, just observe how exceedingly difficult the stroke has now become. The wrists are behind the ball, so that if the player made any attempt to swing in the ordinary manner, the club head would require to cut through the earth for two or three inches in order to get to the ball. Of course that is impossible, and instead the player has by a forward jab of the wrists to insert the blade of the club under the ball and scoop it up. The stroke is played so quickly that it is not easy to realise that this is just what it amounts to. But when one does so regard it, it requires no great thought to see how very difficult it is to play such a stroke quickly and in one motion, and how very



THE NIBLICK: THE ADDRESS WHEN IT IS DESIRED TO OBTAIN
A QUICKLY RISING BALL TO CLEAR A WALL OR HEDGE IMME-
DIATELY IN FRONT.

Note particularly the way in which the club face is turned out.



small is the chance of striking the ball with accuracy. If in the forward jab the head of the club is a fraction of an inch too high, the stroke is half topped ; if it is a fraction of an inch too low, the edge of the blade catches the turf, and rebounds on to the ball with no less fatal effect.

There is only one way of making it easy for yourself to get the club-head properly under the ball, and that is to hit it on the down stroke and before the club has reached the bottom of the swing. To do this it is necessary that the wrists should be slightly in front of the ball at the moment of hitting—a point which I regard as of the utmost importance in making any stroke of this kind. But in so doing of course you tend to decrease rather than to increase the loft of the club. Where, therefore, it is desirable to have more loft I obtain it by turning out the toe of the club, which is only another way of laying back the face. But, you will say, surely the effect of this will be to slice the ball out to the right ? Certainly it will, and you must allow for this by standing round and aiming in a direction correspondingly to the left of that in which you wish finally to rest. Naturally, all this makes it a little difficult to judge your line with perfect accuracy ; but that is a minor drawback compared with the fact that, by playing with the wrists in front of the ball (relatively, that is, to the direction in which you are now aiming) you give yourself an infinitely easier stroke and can be moderately

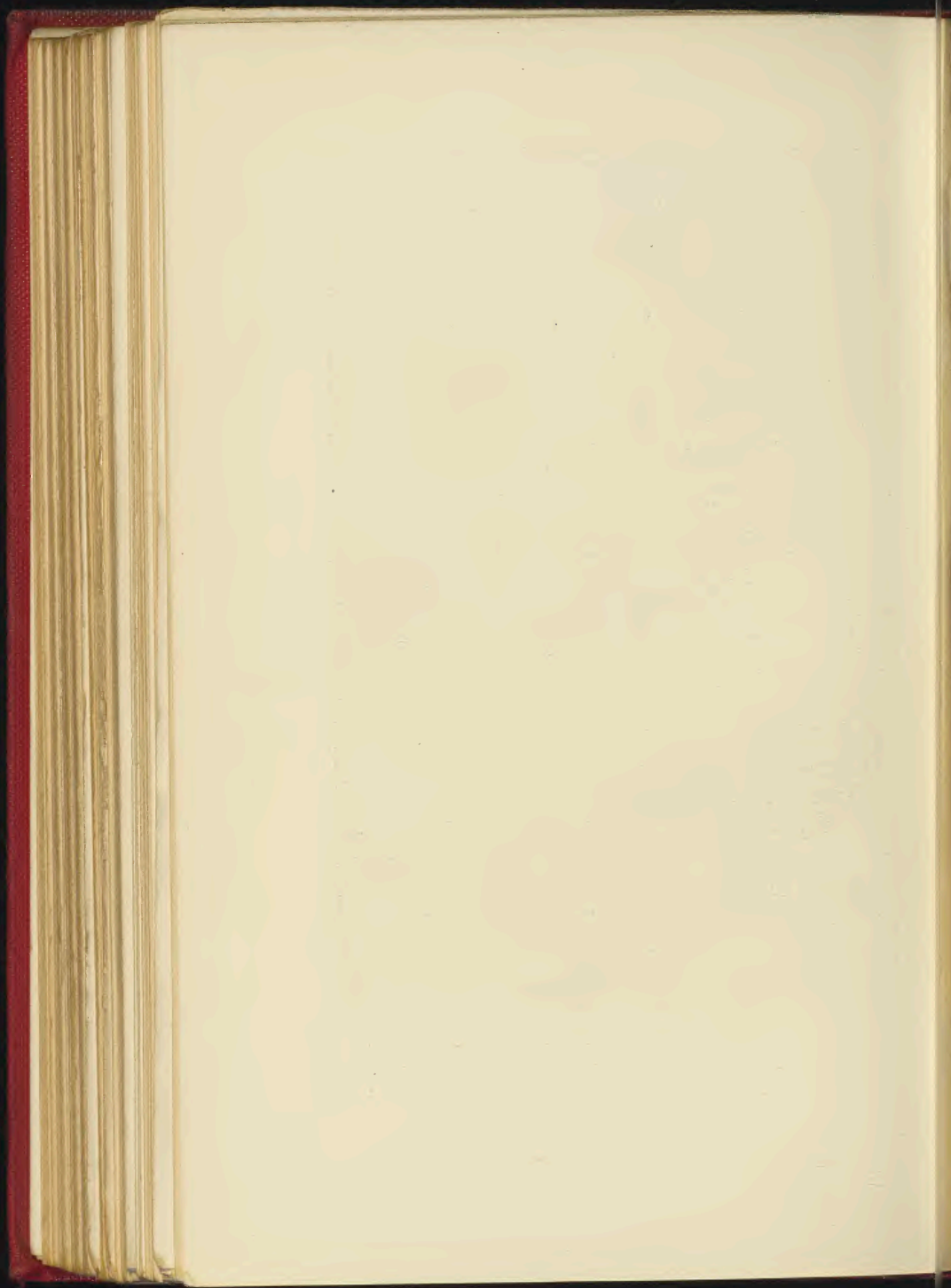
certain of clearing the obstacle in front of you. For that, after all, is the main thing.

Two minor points which it may be worth while to remark upon are that when the ball happens to be lying close in to a hedge it is sometimes worth while to try what can be done in the way of driving it by main force through the sparser lower growth rather than play back, and that where a wall is reasonably smooth and unbroken it is quite good play often to make an attempt to clear it, even when that seems to hold out little prospect of success. Because if the ball be struck smartly and fail to clear the wall, it is almost certain to rebound sufficiently far to leave a simple stroke for the next, so that you are no worse off than if you had played back to start with. The only point to be careful about is to be ready to dodge should the ball in its rebound appear likely to touch your own person or clubs, because there are penalties as well as pains involved, and an unexpected blow may not only prove more severe than you had any fancy for, but add insult to injury in the shape of the loss of the hole in match play, or two strokes in medal.

The method of playing out of water is—especially in these days of non-floating balls—of more interest in theory than in practice. It is true that on the inland courses ponds, and also casual water in hazards, are more frequently to be met with than on the seaside courses. But the average man who finds his ball, say, in the pond at Walton



THE FINISH OF THE QUICK-RISING NIBLICK SHOT TO CLEAR
A HEDGE OR WALL.



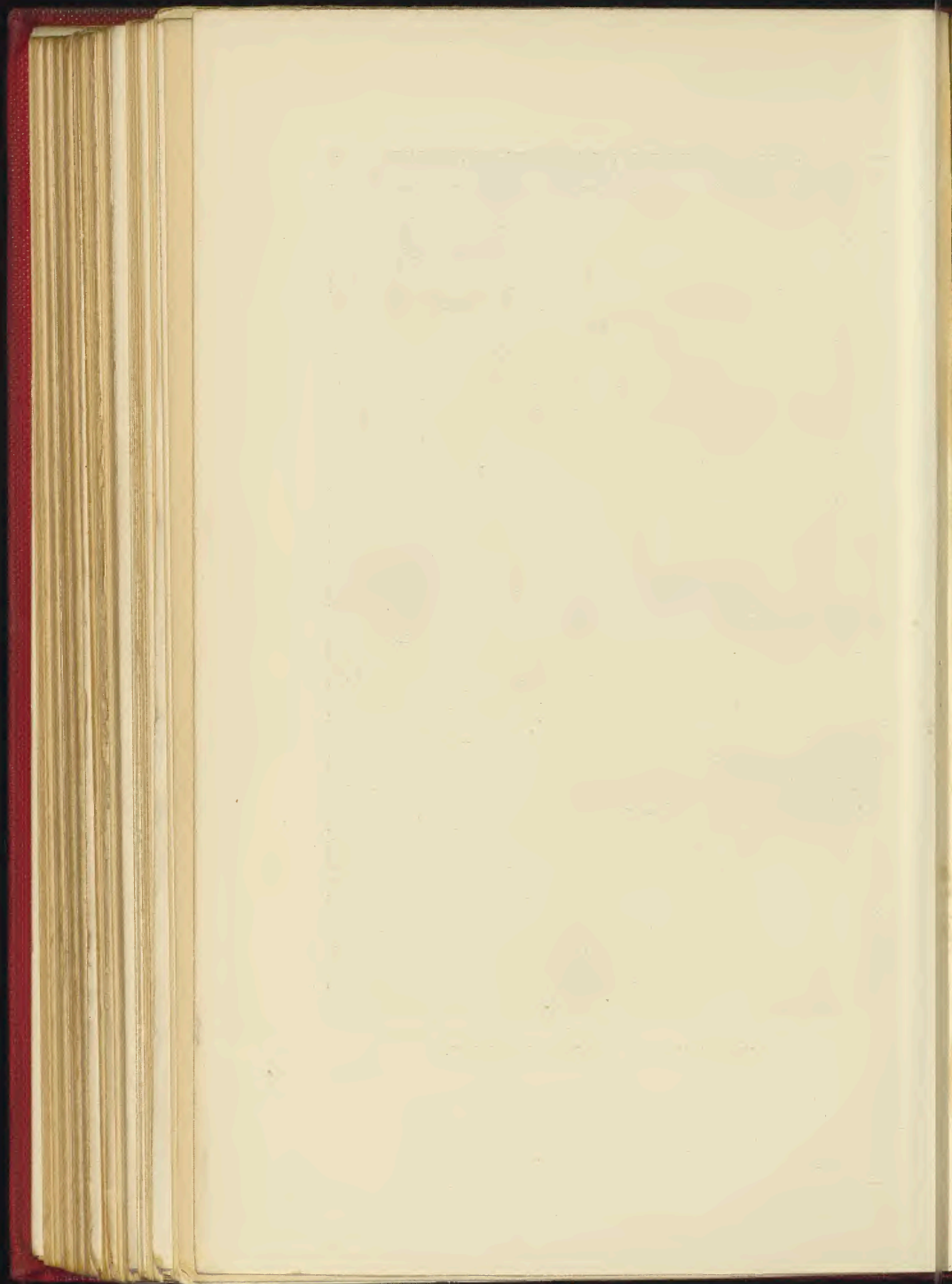
Heath will usually be content to have it salvaged for him by some peripatetic urchin rather than put himself to the discomfort of essaying a stroke which is as likely to fail as not. When the Southern Professionals Foursomes were played at Fulwell, on one occasion Kettley had the misfortune to put a *non-floater* into six feet or thereby of casual water at the bottom of a gravel pit. But even such a "bonny fetcher" as Charles Johns absolutely declined the invitation to wade in and play it out.

Still, there are occasions when to lift under the stroke penalty means the certain loss of a hole or a match, while on the other hand a successful recovery from the water holds out a fair chance of making up for lost ground. There are really two distinct methods of playing the stroke. The first, and that which is advocated by the majority of players, is to drive the head of the club into the water at a distance of about an inch behind the ball and trust to the force of the blow to explode the ball out in much the same manner as from a heavy lie in sand. It seems to me, however, that this method makes it absolutely impossible to get the ball away any distance, and is not so certain as the second method, which is the only one I should ever adopt myself, and which I shall now describe. The idea of it is that the head of the club, preferably an iron, should enter the water about two or three inches behind the ball, and should simply skim the surface, as if it were

intended that the ball should be half-topped. Water being incompressible, the force with which the club-head strikes the water as it first enters it is immediately felt all round, and one effect of this is to make the ball bob up a little on the surface—just sufficiently, in fact, to be nicely in the way of the club-head as it skims along the surface of the water. The beauty of the plan is that not only is there less dead weight of water to break the force of the blow, but the ball itself is comparatively clear of the water at the moment when the club strikes it, and consequently it is a great deal easier to get it well away. The great things to remember are that the tendency of the water is always to make the club move more directly downward than you desire, and that it is absolutely fatal for the club to come down on the ball in any degree. The exact distance behind the ball at which the club should first touch the water is a little difficult to lay down, because it depends to some extent upon the specific gravity of the ball; and in these days different brands vary as much in this respect as in any other. But the distance I have named—between $2\frac{1}{2}$ and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches—is a pretty safe general rule. Unfortunately, this is not the kind of stroke at which one can very well obtain much practice unless one were prepared to go down to the course in a bathing machine.



THE STANCE FOR THE WATER SHOT.



CHAPTER XIII

THE MYSTERY OF THE GREEN

AND now I have reached a phase of the game that has caused more discussion, more heated argument, and more weariness of the flesh, than any other. If there is one thing in this world calculated to make a man look and feel an idiot, it is surely the missing of a foot putt in the presence of a crowd. If the victim be a famous player—and there are bad putters even amongst the greatest—a murmur arises, for the majority of onlookers cannot understand how a player, whose driving has excited their envy, and whose play through the green has been perfect, should fail to negotiate a stroke that can be measured in inches.

Why should this phase of the game be so difficult? If my life depended on a correct answer I should hand in my checks, for I do not believe that there is a golfer living who can bring forward a feasible explanation. It is no answer to say, "You do not strike the ball properly," or "You should follow through more." Having missed the putt, we are quite aware that something was out of gear, and it may well be that the ball was

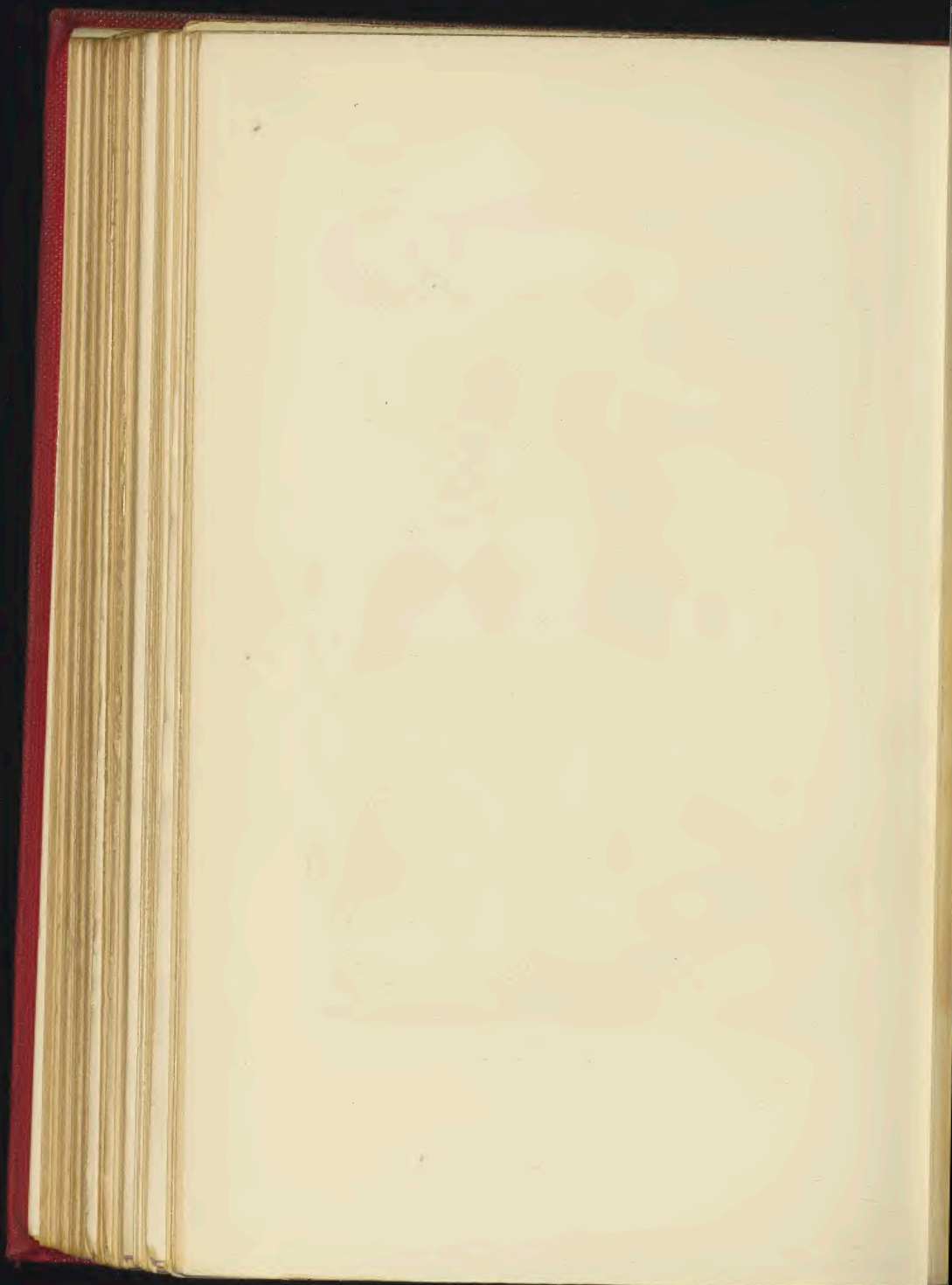
not struck properly, or that it was not followed up. But why do we so often leave undone the things which we ought to have done, and which only a second before we were fully resolved to do? This is the real unsoluble mystery of the green, and apart from it putting is a simple matter, with regard to which the player can safely be left to his own devices and instruction confined to a few simple and undisputed maxims.

Yet at the very outset I wish to express my disagreement with a theory which has obtained almost universal acceptance and has been repeated by one after another of my fellow professionals. It is said that the putter, suspended like a pendulum from the wrists, should swing backward and forward along a straight line to which the head of the putter should at every point of the swing be at right angles. I have no hesitation in saying, not only that this is wrong, but that it is a physical impossibility.

No doubt if one were to swing the putter in the same manner as a croquet player swings his mallet—with the hands held directly above the ball—this theory of swinging in a straight line would be perfectly correct. But to follow it out on the putting green we should require to play with a putter having the shaft exactly at right angles to the head, in order that the position of the hands might be directly over the ball. And this is exactly the kind of putter which scarcely anybody uses and which I for one have no sort of fancy for.



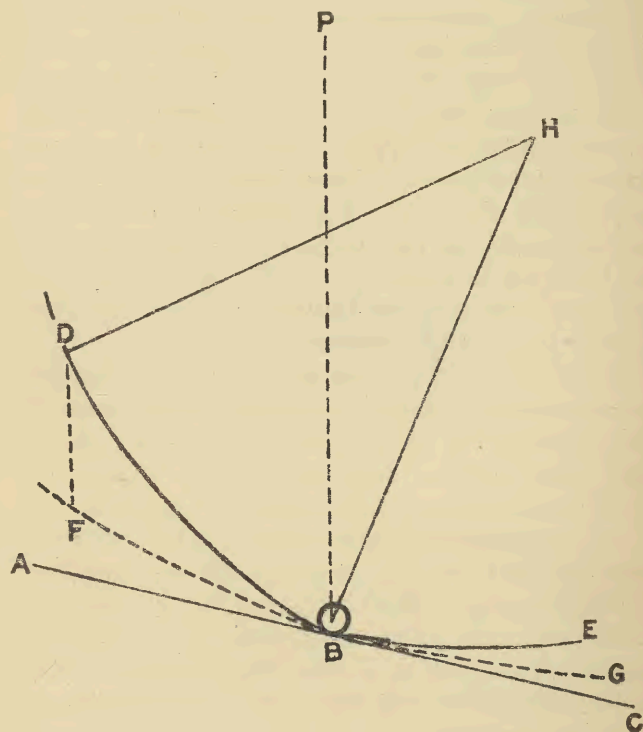
PUTTING : THE ADDRESS.



Now just let us consider for a moment the position of the club as it addresses the ball. The hands are not exactly above the ball, but at a point nearer to the player, with the shaft of the club sloping downwards and outwards from hands to ball. If the hands are to be maintained in the same position throughout the stroke, the only natural way for the club to swing is in a plane containing the line of the shaft in the position of the address and the intended line of the putt. But that is not a perpendicular plane, and to an eye looking down from above the head of the club as it swings in that plane does *not* appear to be moving along a straight line but along a very slight curve.

If the player does succeed in making the club-head appear to move along a straight line, it proves that he is doing one of two things. Either he is allowing his hands to move back and forward along with the head of the putter, which is a style adopted by a great many players who are blissfully unaware of the fact, or else he is actually swinging the club-head out from him both in the back swing and in the follow through, so that it appears to his eye to be travelling straight. But if the putter is swung as it should be, the straight line is an impossibility.

I think I can make my meaning clearer by a diagram, though it is always a ticklish business to try and represent three dimensions on plane paper. However, here goes :



In this diagram B is the position of the ball, H the position of the player's hands throughout the stroke. HB is the club shaft at the moment of striking the ball, and AC is the line of the putt, the hole, of course, being in the direction of C . BP is a perpendicular to the ground at B . Now the club-head moves in the arc of the circle DBE , whose centre is H . When the club swings back so that it is at HD , the head of it at D has moved both upwards and inwards, and the perpendicular from D to the ground falls at F , a point nearer to the player than the line AC . In fact, FBG , the line of motion of the club-head as it appears to an eye looking down upon it from above is an arc of an ellipse.

I have purposely exaggerated in my diagram both the slant of the club and the curve of its swing, in order to make my idea more plain. But, as a matter of fact, when the swing is a short one the curve is so slight as to be imperceptible, and for very short putts there is no harm in the straight line theory. But a putt of two yards or over, where the stroke is no longer a sharp tap but a swing through a considerable arc, is a very different affair, and the inward trend of the club's motion is distinctly perceptible. I am convinced that the reason why so many players tend to pull their putts to the left of the hole is this pernicious and unnatural attempt to keep the club-head moving in a straight line during the backward swing.

And that brings me to another point. Just as the club-head does not naturally move in a straight line, neither is it at right angles to the line of the putt throughout the swing. It is, in fact, always at right angles to the line of its own motion : so that the toe of the putter from being slightly turned outwards during the upward and downward swing, is at right angles to the line of the putt at the instant of striking the ball, and begins to turn in slightly during the follow through. I am the more inclined to believe in this natural turn of the club because I am convinced that it assists that forward spin of the ball which we call its roll.

Whether this is always a desirable thing is a matter of opinion. Many fine putters—Jack White is a notable example—like to putt with as much “ drag ” or back-spin as they can manage. The ball starts off from the face of their club as if it were skimming along the ground, sliding rather than rolling. And no doubt this style has its advantages. But for my own part I prefer at all times to see the ball rolling along the ground from the instant that it leaves the club face. I admit that on hard, bare, true greens, such as are to be found at St. Andrew’s and North Berwick, there is much to be said in favour of the contrary method, and I have no quarrel with anyone who thinks differently from myself. But I am writing for inland golfers, and I would urge them either to make themselves master of both methods or

to adopt a simple, natural style of stroke without any attempt at artificial spin, for by so doing they will obtain the rolling ball which I conceive to be best suited to city greens.

I have nothing to say against the putting greens of our inland courses. The best of them are as good as the best on any sea-side links ; not seldom, indeed, they are the redeeming feature of otherwise quite undistinguished courses. But, on the other hand, the worst of them, as for instance the half-trimmed patches of the fair-way honoured with the courtesy title of "winter greens" on city courses can be very bad indeed. And even on well-kept greens we have often a great deal to contend against. The turf is seldom so fine as by the sea, and, unless the subsoil be sandy, we have always the worm that dieth not putting in overtime on the night shift. Therefore the inland golfer must be prepared to putt on a surface which is very far short of being perfectly true ; and on such a surface it is infinitely easier to judge the length of a rolling putt than of a "cut-back" one.

For, to begin with, a rolling ball is not nearly so much affected by the nature of the surface over which it passes as is a ball which is only partly rolling and partly sliding. Now, the real difficulty of many inland greens is that they are by no means equally stiff at different parts. Commonly they are much less heavy immediately around the hole than further out from it. But this variability of texture is a factor of much less importance in

judging the strength of a rolling putt than it is in the case of a putt played with drag.

On a rough and bumpy green also, the advantage is all with the running ball. A putt that is played with more or less back spin is completely at the mercy of the obstacles it encounters in its journey, and is more easily turned off the line or brought to a stand-still than the rolling ball, which, however it may be bumped about, does not easily lose the forward spin of its rolling motion; and that forward spin is always tending to take it onward again in its original direction.

The only kind of putt where the rolling ball seems to me to be at a disadvantage is that along or down a slope. Undoubtedly there is a greater tendency for the hill to run away with the ball than if it is played with back-spin, and for this particular stroke I believe that the man who is master of the cut-back putt will be apt to have the best of matters.

Of course it sometimes occurs that a clay soil and English weather combine to produce a putting green so bad as to be only one remove from a sea of trampled mud. In such a case accurate play with the putter is out of the question, the more so if, as often happens, a small cart-load of mud has been annexed by the ball when it pitched on the green. This unearned increment effectually destroys the symmetry of the original sphere, and as a result the path of the rolling ball is no longer that of the teetotaller. In such a case there is

nothing for it but to tap the ball up to the hole with an iron or a mashie—the former for preference.

The great thing to remember in playing this stroke is that, although you are using a lofted club, you are still putting. There are some players who cannot take an iron into their hand without becoming obsessed with the necessity of getting the ball up ; and accordingly they stab at the ball in a feeble attempt to get the blade of the club under it and jerk it up to the hole. Naturally, there is not much room for judgment of line or length, when the putt is played like this. The truth is, that putting with an iron is precisely the same stroke as with a putter, and should be played in precisely the same way. The only difference is that the loft of the iron sends the ball skimming along an inch or two above the ground for the greater part of its journey. But the loft of the club will do its work without any assistance on your part. Remember, therefore, that the observations contained in this chapter regarding the method of playing your putts are equally applicable, no matter what club you use.

It is possible with a little practice to putt with an iron very well indeed though of course it can never be so suitable a weapon as the putter itself. But when the ordinary route to the hole is barred by bad ground or a stymie the iron can be a tower of strength. Nevertheless, do not be disappointed when you discover that, no matter how you play

your putts, you can never hole out on a muddy green with anything like the certainty that you have on a true one.

At the same time, it is only just to say that there are some inland courses on whose greens I feel more confidence than on many seaside ones, because the ball can be struck firmly and there is less danger of running out of holing distance. For putting the fear of death into you, I know of nothing worse than St. Andrews after a dry spell. A little tap only is required for a putt of 6 yards, and just as you are beginning to congratulate yourself on having laid it dead, it seems to take a new lease of life near the hole, and you are left with that "dirty" one of 3 feet. We get none of this inland, for the texture of our greens is very different, and I much prefer the dead artificial to the greased lightning "natural."

Now, although I have so far described my own method and stated my opinions regarding the putter with something like confidence, I am far from wishing to insist upon the adoption of any particular style, for I believe that there are as many ways of putting as Kipling declares there are of constructing tribal lays, and equally that "every single one of them is right." We may be inclined to smile at the man who turns his back to the hole and putts through his legs, but if he finds this method justified, what matters his little idiosyncrasy? Still, there are certain cardinal rules to which we must all conform.

Chief among these is : Do not sway the body. To do so is to invite bad direction—generally a push-out, for in swaying forward the hands are apt to advance too quickly. You should, therefore, try to keep the body still, and putt with the wrists only. Having mentioned wrists, I must add that the extent of their use depends entirely on the length of the stroke. With a putt of 20 yards you would more often find yourself lamentably short if you tried to putt stiffly. On the other hand, I believe the wrists should be kept stiff for short putts ; but this again is merely a matter of opinion, and if a player assures me that he putts really well with loose wrists, I shall not quarrel with him. A very important matter is to see that the club face, in addressing the ball, is absolutely at right angles to the hole, for, unless it is so, no motion of the body or the wrists will successfully rectify the initial fault.

It is generally agreed also that we should follow through with our putts. To do this properly, we must let the left hand come well through, for unless it does so, we naturally check the swing of the club. I believe that on the green the left hand is usually the greater criminal. We bring the club forward with the right, the left acting as a steadier ; but as soon as the ball has been struck, the left ceases to work, and what is known as a stab is the natural outcome. One excellent aid to a good follow through is to take the club back well. Although he has an occasional off day, I always

envy Braid's deliberate taking back of the club. I know that he has schooled himself to do this, and there is no doubt that it is a valuable habit to acquire, for nothing is more calculated to bring about a missed putt than to take the club back as if against time. The back swing must be deliberate in order to be correct, and the forward motion is thereby helped considerably.

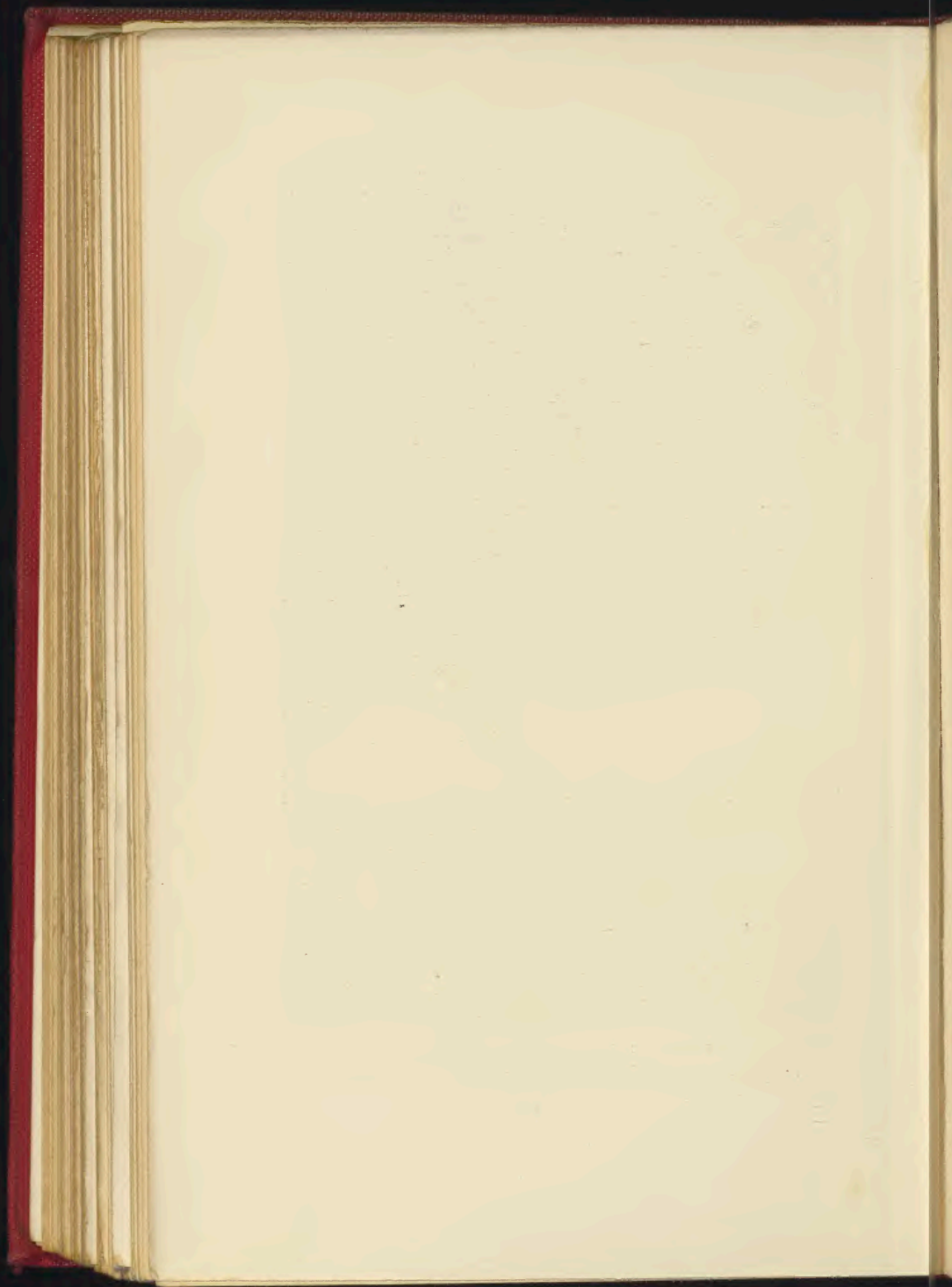
Boiled down, the correct procedure in putting I take to be this: First ascertain the correct borrow—if any; grasp the club firmly, but not too rigidly; see that it faces the hole; take the club *back* and *through* as a pendulum might swing from the wrists; and do not look up until the ball has been sent on its journey. If, obeying all these maxims, you still miss the hole, heaven only knows what there is left for you to try! unless you care to follow the example of an enthusiast I once knew, who was convinced that putting was an affair of diet. His first great sacrifice was to give up drink for a week; his nerves, he argued, were shaky. But the result was no improvement. Thereafter, for a time, he tried drinking in moderation, but still the secret was elusive. Then he went to the other extreme and soaked himself; but while he certainly putted better, he found that his driving and approach play, which had been good, were too great a sacrifice. And in the end he discarded his putter for a mashie.

The whole difficulty of putting is a psychological question, and I am not the person to explain it;



PUTTING: THE FOLLOW THROUGH.

Note how the club head finishes inside the line from the ball to the hole.



but I do know this, that in competitive golf, when we are called upon to hole a yard putt, there seems to come a series of messages from the brain to the feet, hands and eyes, the result of which is often to confuse us, and entail another stroke, one important marconigram having gone astray in transit.

In putting, there is more concentration required than for any other stroke. For this reason I regard with great satisfaction the photograph on the preceding page, where I am shown gazing fixedly at the spot that the ball has already left under the impulse of my putter. I believe this habit to be a good one, for it ensures that the eye will be kept fixed on the ball, and naturally, if we do this, we have a better chance of striking the ball correctly. To assist them to look at the ball, many players have a mark of some sort on the face of the club. Several players of note in Yorkshire have a preference for a piece of stamp paper, which they place opposite the ball when addressing it, and though they must needs lose sight of this in drawing the club back, yet it certainly seems to assist them to the end desired.

The part of the face on which the ball should be struck is a debatable point. Some argue that it should be struck a little off the toe, but the reason for this belief I could never understand, for if the club is well balanced, surely the middle is the correct spot. I know very well that with the club I putt with—an aluminium putter—

unless I hit the ball from the centre, it never feels as if it had been struck correctly.

If I were asked what is the most useful maxim in regard to putting, I should have no hesitation in stating that the proverbial "never up, never in" is the best of all, for only when we can bring ourselves to realise that a putt is just as easily negotiated from a yard past the hole as from a yard short of it shall we begin to hole long putts with frequency. Nothing is so exasperating as the putt that stops on the lip of the hole; we are annoyed because we have not "given the hole a chance." But we seldom complain if we lip the hole and run a foot beyond; "'Tis better to have tried and missed, than never to have tried at all."

"To think," says the author of *The Mystery of Golf*, "when we ought to play, is madness." I heartily agree with his contention, for bad putting is more often the result of the curse of imagination than of incorrect method. We can see trouble in every inch of a two-yard putt; the hole itself seems microscopic, and the ball seems to increase in size every moment taken up by the preliminary manoeuvres our excess of caution compels us to indulge in. Imagination in putting, therefore, is a thing that we are better without. Of course it is the simplest thing in the world to tell us to suppress it, but it requires a great amount of will-power to do it. Yet it will be found that the best putters do not allow their minds to dwell on anything

except hitting the ball correctly and giving the hole a chance.

Moreover, if thought is dangerous, thoughtlessness is fatal. There is no putt so short that it cannot be missed, as witness an incident in which a very famous player, being left with a putt of three inches for the hole, not only failed to win it, but did not even secure a half! The player was a professional who has figured regularly in the English team in the International, and is commonly reckoned more than ordinarily careful and reliable upon the greens; and the occasion was an important match against a brother professional for a considerable money stake. But he played that three-inch putt with so little care that the head of his club struck the ground behind the ball, and failed altogether to hit the ball itself. And then, in his chagrin at his misfortune, he managed at the second attempt to strike his opponent's ball, which was also on the edge of the hole, as well as his own, and so lost a hole that seemed certainly won.

The moral that I would draw from this incident is that every putt, however short, should be played in the proper way. To knock a short one into the hole with a single-handed tap of the back of the putter, doubtless looks very well—so long as it goes down. But sooner or later you will pay for your carelessness by missing a ridiculously short one just when you are

most anxious not to, and probably looking as foolish as you feel.

To ensure that our minds will be concentrated on the matter in hand, some of us waste time over our putts, walk carefully to the hole and look back along the line, return to the ball and view it from this standpoint and that. On the other hand, some prefer to take just a passing look, and then to play it. They fear their imagination running riot, and I am inclined to the belief that these latter are better putters on the whole. But the next time you see a good player stalking backwards and forwards on the green, do not be led away by the idea that he is specially painstaking, but rather pity him for a nervous individual who is putting off the evil moment as long as he possibly can.

And now, in conclusion, I am going to take up a different position from other writers on the game, who, without a dissentient voice, emphasize the necessity of constant practice in order to make oneself a good putter. In my opinion, any practice save that obtained in competitions is a sheer waste of time as far as putting is concerned. Go out on to your last green with a putter and six balls—you will never take more than two putts from any part of the green. And this may seem strange if in a previous game you have putted in a most miserable manner; but there is nothing strange about the matter at all. For, putting by yourself, you have

nothing to bother about ; you are playing neither for a half nor for the hole. Therefore, your nerves are at rest and your imagination is not conjuring up all sorts of evils that will befall in the event of your being too short or too strong. In short, putting for the moment becomes the easiest thing in the world.

But that will stand you in no stead when the time of trial comes again. The only way to practice on the green that is of any real help is to make it a rule to hole out all putts, however short, even in friendly matches—and, I should perhaps add, to see that your opponent does the same.

In this respect I can cite to you no better example than that set by an amateur with whom I was once having a round at Oxhey. On one green it happened that I was left with a putt of not more than six inches for the hole, and as I was walking up to my ball I remarked half-jokingly : " Come, now, surely you don't want me to hole that." My opponent gave a sort of dry grin. " No ! " he said, " I don't—but you just have a try, all the same."

CHAPTER XIV

THE PUSH SHOT

THERE is no stroke in golf round which the seas of controversy have raged more fiercely than that which is commonly known as the push shot. One player has even gone the length of saying that there is no such stroke. Everyone is entitled to his own opinion on the matter ; mine is perfectly clear not only that there is such a stroke, but that I and many other professionals play it regularly. How the stroke is actually played can be very simply explained. *The club-head meets the ball before it has reached the lowest point of the swing. The arms are stiff, and the weight of the body moves forward at the same time as the head of the club.* The whole purpose of the stroke is to obtain length combined with a low trajectory.

We have several players who, in my opinion, play a push for almost every stroke ; chief of these is J. H. Taylor. I believe that he knocks the ball down slightly with every iron club, except his mashie. His action is naturally a stiff one, and he uses his weight in such a manner that the push comes natural to him. I always



THE STANCE FOR THE PUSH SHOT WITH THE CLEEK.

Compare this and the two following photographs with the corresponding photographs of the ordinary cleek shot.



look upon the stroke as something of a cricket stroke, and I am confirmed in this opinion by observing that reformed cricketers invariably play the stroke well. The finest push stroke player I have ever seen is certainly Mr. F. S. Jackson. He plays the stroke to perfection, and I feel sure that he finds that his cricket experience has helped him considerably.

I have stated that I play this stroke frequently myself, and I think I cannot do better than explain more exactly my method of doing so. My stance is slightly more advanced than usual and closer to the ball, and my hands are a little in advance of the club-head, so that the loft of the club is reduced at the outset. I keep my wrists perfectly stiff, for the slightest flexion means that the stroke will be robbed of its "pushful" character. My right elbow is kept carefully in to my side. Note that in the back swing the club must not be allowed to drop down over the shoulder, for if it does so, it becomes impossible, from an anatomical standpoint, to keep the wrists stiff. You can easily prove this for yourself by taking a cleek or any other club, and swinging it back, keeping the wrists stiff all the time. You will find that you get back to a certain point where it is no longer physically possible to proceed without the right wrist buckling up. I believe, therefore, that the push stroke is really a right-arm stroke. Now, having taken the club back thus stiffly—and the back

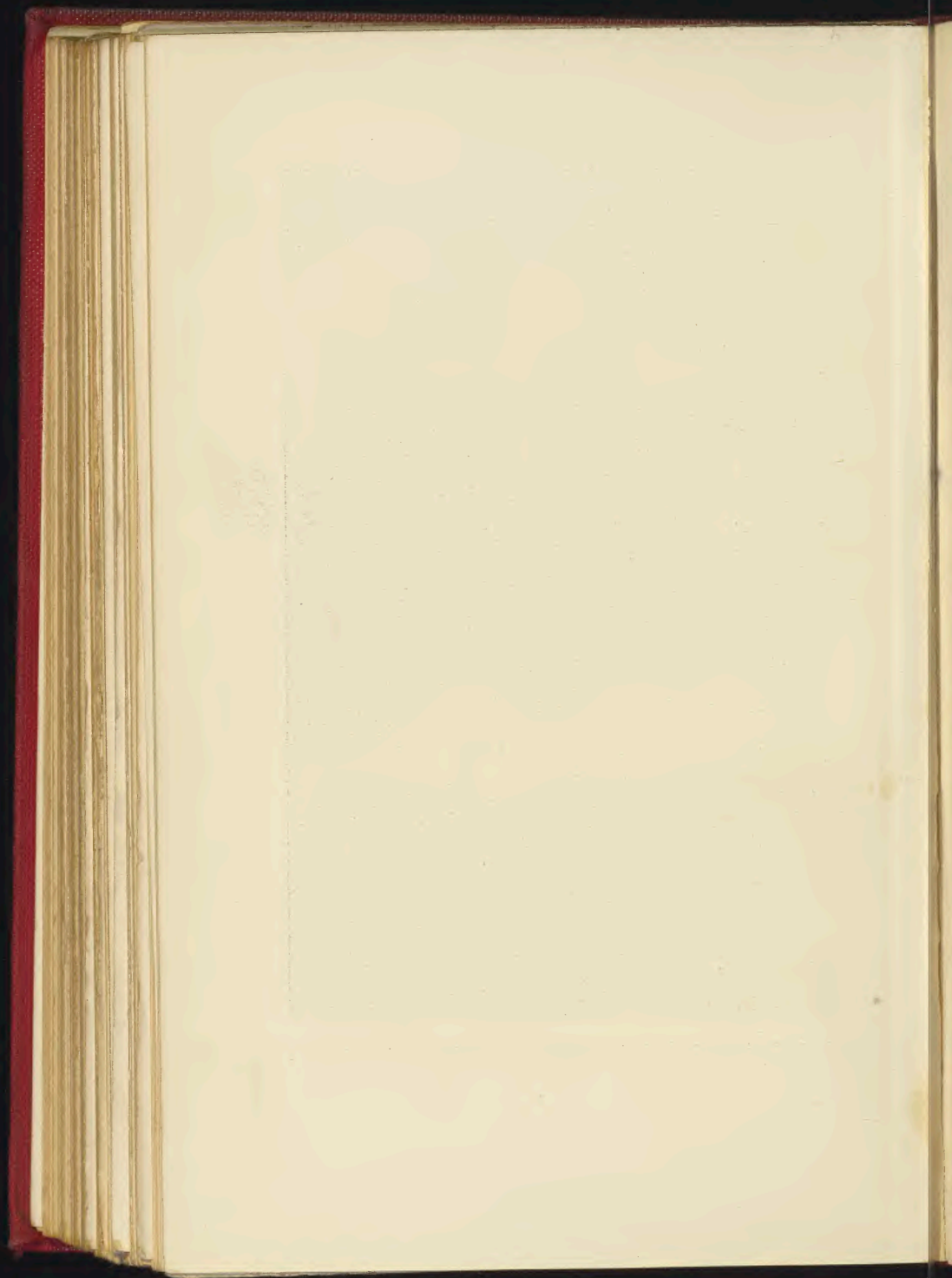
swing is all-important—I move my body forward as I bring my club down. This alteration of the distribution of the weight, as I have already pointed out, is the most important factor in the stroke, for if the weight of the body is kept back in the slightest degree, the stroke becomes impossible. The club is brought down with the wrists and forearms quite stiff, the weight goes forward as well, and if everything be correct up to this point, this forward movement of the body should result in the ball being struck before the club reaches its lowest level. The position of the hands in the address has reduced the loft of the club at the very beginning, and the forward movement of the body reduces it still more. When the ball is struck the right wrist comes over slightly, and the club continuing on its downward course, grazes the ground an inch or so in advance of where the ball lay.

With all this taking off of the loft, the reader might well ask, how on earth the ball gets up at all. I can only say that the wind against the ball assists it to a very great extent, and it also appears to me that if the stroke be played correctly, the ball, as it leaves the club, is spinning towards the player. The tendency of the back spin is always to make the ball rise, and in this case is sufficient to prevent the ball dropping quickly as its low initial trajectory would otherwise force it to do.

There can be no doubt that the push stroke



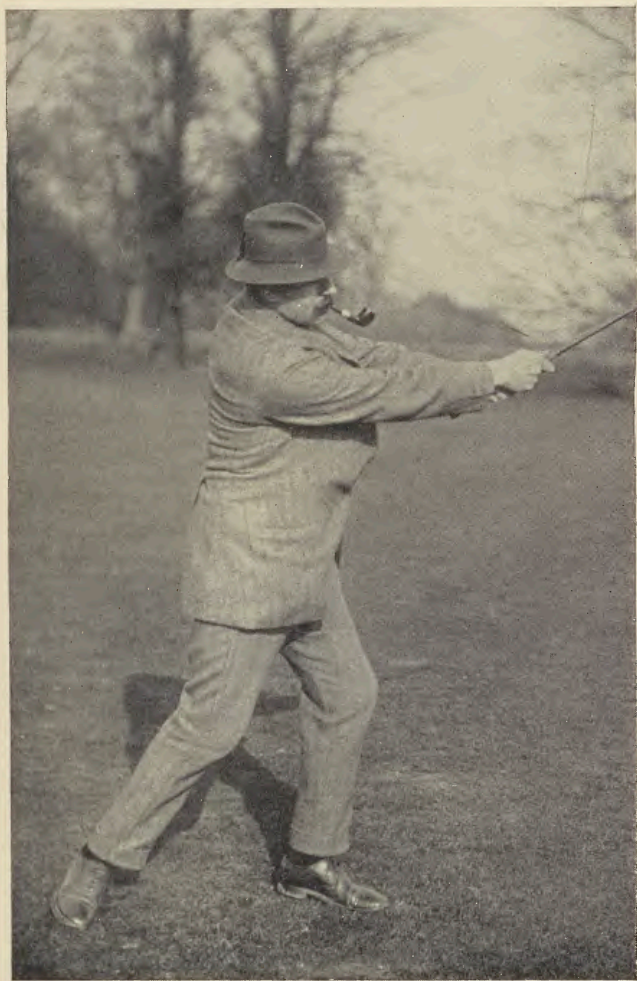
THE PUSH SHOT WITH THE CLEEK: THE TOP OF THE SWING.



is the most advanced of all the advanced strokes in golf, and it is therefore essentially a good player's stroke. Only a player with perfect control over his swing can afford to tempt fortune by trying it. I was discussing the stroke with three famous players at the time that the controversy was raging around it, and we were all agreed on one point, that the weight of the body must go forward with the club. When the swing is correct it is the club-head that is bringing up the rear.

With one common idea regarding the push shot I entirely disagree, and that is the notion that the shot can only be played properly with the cleek. Certainly it is with the cleek that I usually do play it; against the wind I find I can get as far as if I had used a driver, and the risk of being carried out of the straight by the wind is considerably lessened, for better direction is obtained by a low shot than with a rocketeer. Naturally, if there is a bunker immediately in front of me, it would be folly to tempt providence with a low shot, but with no trouble in advance, I prefer to play the push shot. But there is no reason why the same shot should not be played with an iron or a mashie. As a matter of fact, I do often use the push shot with these clubs in playing from the tee at a short hole against the wind. I have cited J. H. Taylor as a player who employs the push action for most of his strokes; at least, his swing usually

conforms to the methods that characterise the push stroke as I understand it. He is essentially a stiff player, endowed by nature with powerful wrists in which there is very little flexibility. He can obtain a very long cleek or iron shot with apparently very little effort, and this I believe to be due to the stiff wrists and curtailed swing, and he certainly knocks his ball down to begin with. Braid obtains a similar result, but by body movement, and he, I believe, can play the stroke with most clubs. I am sometimes inclined to believe that the whole secret of the push stroke lies in the sway of the body, and if that is so, I play more or less of a push shot even with my wooden clubs.



THE PUSH SHOT WITH THE CLEEK : FINISH.



CHAPTER XV

PLAY IN WIND

ANY golf course which is so sheltered from the four winds that it gives the player no opportunity to realize the difficulty of playing in a breeze, is lacking in its most interesting feature. Golf in a wind is a different game altogether, and there are few players whose play does not fall off five or ten per cent. when the stormy winds do blow. All the same, a little wind adds interest to the game, and, personally, I prefer a slight breeze to what is usually termed "an ideal golfing day—no sun or wind," though I confess that to play in a gale is no game whatever, and exercise alone can only be the motive that lures us out to totter on the tee, and lose penalty strokes, and tempers, through the ball moving when we are in the middle of the swing.

Some players seem to revel in these conditions. Arnaud Massy, for instance, must have a warm corner in his heart for the gales of Hoylake, where he won the championship in a storm of wind and rain that played havoc with the cards of less bulky players. Now, I do not deny that in the matter of wind, the seaside player gets full measure,

but I hasten to add that it is generally a steady blow, whereas on our inland courses we get it served up in patches, owing to hedges and trees that break its force in places, and this works much to our discomfiture at times, for we often play a shot up to the hole from a sheltered spot, and, seeing it come to earth forty yards short, suddenly realize that we reckoned without the wind that is sweeping across that particular green unchecked by the hill that has broken its force at the spot from which we are playing.

I have often heard it stated that a well-hit ball is very little affected by wind ; but that is only true as regards a side wind. Even on a dead calm day there is always an air cushion in front of the ball, but when the wind is blowing in our teeth, the air cushion becomes a travelling buffer, and we have to do our utmost to keep the ball low, so as to minimise the effect of this "head on" destroyer.

On the other hand, we can turn the wind to our advantage in many ways : if it is behind us we can get increased length ; if it is across we can make it help us very materially. It would be idle to pretend that to play these windy strokes successfully does not call for a more than average amount of skill. Many of the strokes I shall describe are of a rather advanced type, but they are, nevertheless, well worth taking some pains to acquire.

Let me first deal with the drive against the

wind. In the first place, with the wind in our teeth, our desire must be to obtain a low trajectory, and to this end we should see that the erection that misguided caddies call a tee is kept reasonably low. The main factor that we must give our attention to is the disposal of the weight of the body, for, as in a push stroke, if the body fails to come through when the club meets the ball the result will be a skier. I will go so far as to say that the correct drive against the wind has all the characteristics of a push stroke, for we so stand that in swinging our driver meets the ball before it has reached the lowest level of the arc of its swing. The weight, which must go forward at the same time as the club-head, assists in the task of keeping the ball down ; the hands must also be in advance of the club-head. In fact, we bring to bear every means of ensuring that the ball will not soar unduly. The ordinary golfer may be pardoned for assuming that to get the weight in advance of the club-head is bound to result in a smothered stroke ; and so it might were it not for the wind. But the wind against the ball helps to drive it up. Naturally, the chief danger is that we may overdo this knocking down business ; and this is one reason why I have said that the stroke is somewhat advanced.

The stance for the stroke is a little more in front of the ball than one would take up for an ordinary drive. Instead of the ball being in a line with the left heel, it is brought nearer to the right,

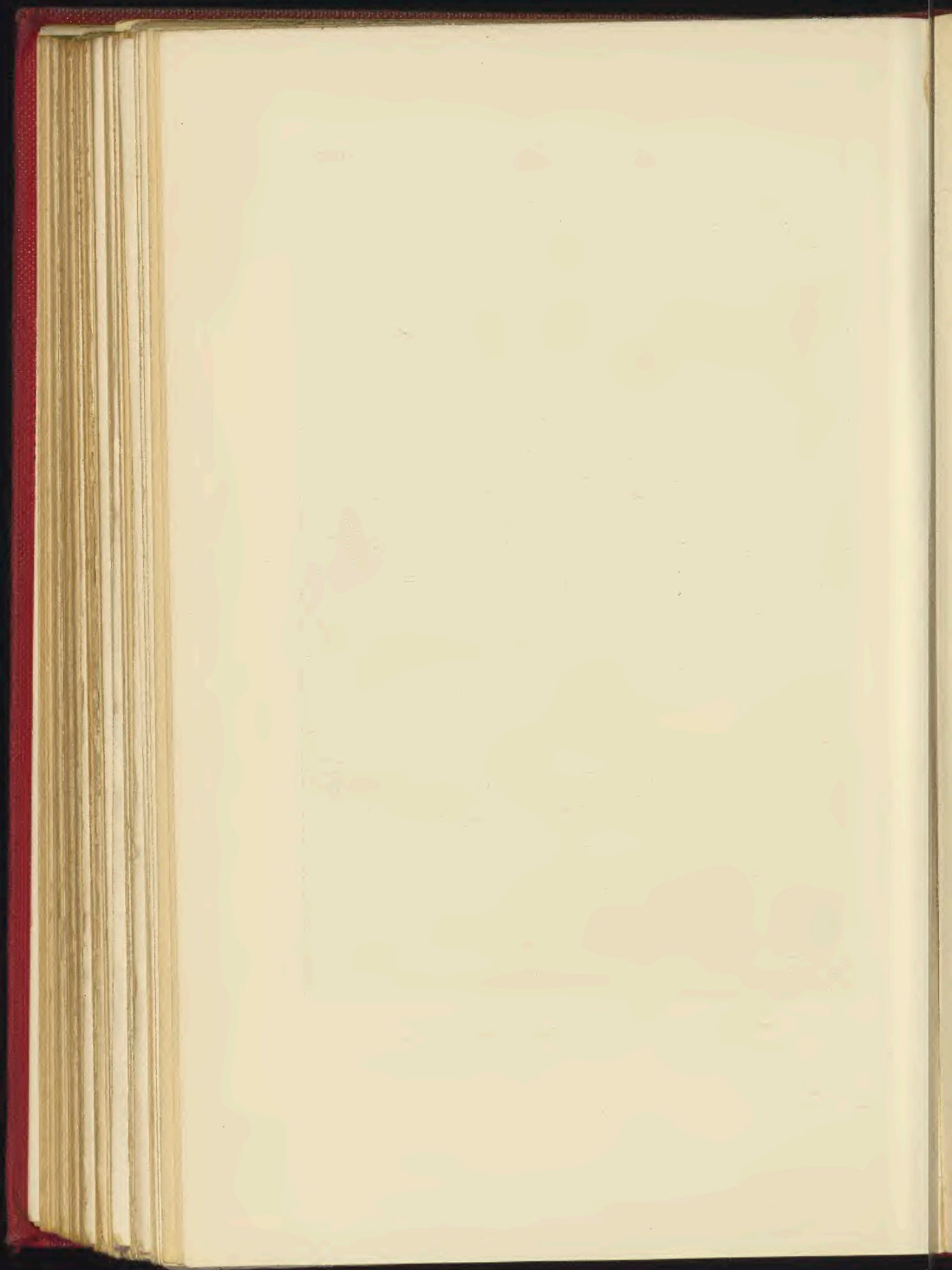
and if the player can reduce the length of his back swing it will be all the better.

So much for the drive against the wind. In driving with the wind the method employed is just the reverse. Instead of keeping the ball down, we now try to get it up quickly, in order to reap the full benefit of the following wind. To this end the player should stand with the ball still in a line with the left heel; but now he can take his ordinary swing, for it should always be borne in mind that the fuller the swing the greater is the height obtained, by reason of the circular sweep of the club; when a player takes half a swing it is always flatter as well as shorter. The weight of the body is now kept back when the club is brought down, in order that the club-head may get there first. The ball is struck when the club is about to rise, and if the wind has not blown the player over, the result should be a high shot. The one thing to guard against in driving down wind is the possibility of being blown on to the ball, and to combat this in addressing the ball the weight should certainly be kept still more on the right leg, so as to be on the side nearest the wind. These two strokes, against and with the wind, though advanced, are certainly within the scope of any decent player.

I now turn my attention to a problem that is far more difficult—the question of utilising the wind that is blowing across the line of flight. This is where most golfers are all at sea. Let me first



THE STANCE FOR THE INTENTIONAL PULL.



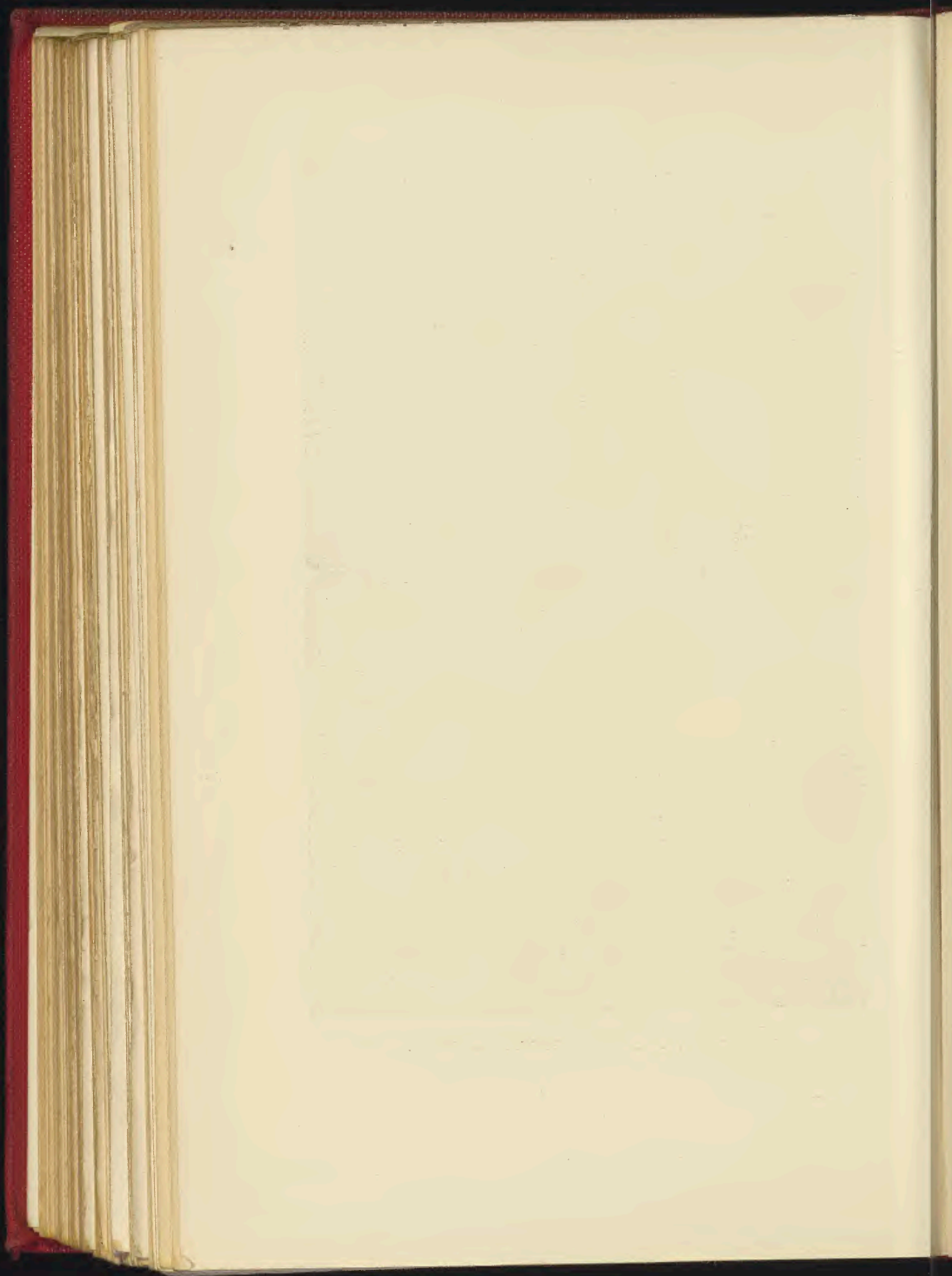
deal with the tee shot in a wind blowing from right to left. In the case of the tee shot distance is the chief consideration, and therefore my object must be as far as possible to let the drive finish with the wind behind it. I therefore stand to play to the right-hand side of the course with a slight pull; but I nevertheless turn the toe of the club *out*, as if deliberately inviting a slice. This, however, is merely to enable me, as my club is coming down, to turn my right hand over the left, so that when the club-head meets the ball, the toe is coming over rapidly. The chief fault of most players when playing with the wind from right to left is that in trying to prevent a bad pull they manage to obtain a slice. They overdo matters by bringing the club across the ball, with the result that the ball turns up into the wind. It is to guard against this tendency to cut that I deliberately stand out for a pull. I have allowed for it by aiming to the right, and the effect of the toe being turned out and the right hand coming over is at once seen in the manner in which the ball swings in after going some distance. The reader may ask, Why not keep the face at right angles all the time? But he must remember that in playing for a pull the right hand finishes over the left, and if I did not keep the toe of the club out when the wind is from the right, then, the wind helping, the ball would finish far to the left of the course.

If the wind is in the other direction—from left to right—everything depends upon the stance and

swing. You must still play into the eye of the wind ; but this time with a little cut, so that the ball at the finish should be travelling down wind towards the right. The first thing is to alter the stance : the left foot should be drawn back a trifle, to permit of the club being brought more across the body, so as to impart a little cut ; but care must be taken not to overdo it, which is where the majority of players fall into error. They know that if they can come across the ball a trifle while aiming to the left, the wind will help them ; but they altogether exaggerate this part of the stroke, with the result that the cut becomes a bad slice and the ball merely flies across the course. I am always at special pains to make sure of my stance and swing when I play the stroke, and this is how I endeavour to bring it off : I stand with the left foot back a trifle ; I do not turn the face of my club out, but, on the contrary, I take care to turn the toe in slightly. I have been told that this statement is hard to credit, but, nevertheless, it is just what I do, and my reason is this : I am standing for a cut, I know that my club will come down slightly across the line of flight, and I keep the toe of my club turned in, simply in order to prevent the cut degenerating into a slice. The mere act of swinging across prevents the possibility of a pull ; therefore the toe slightly over tempers down the slice that is imparted by the swing across. This, again, is an advanced stroke, and the player whose living does not depend upon his skill is



THE STANCE FOR THE INTENTIONAL SLICE.



usually content with a short but straight drive, with no desire to take risks. I think I have so far shown, however, that the wind can be well employed if the player has sufficient skill. I look back with pride to one second shot that I played at the eleventh hole at Muirfield, in the championship. I was on the left-hand side of the course with my tee shot. The wind was from the left, and the hole was too far off for me to reach in any other way. The crowd, which I had asked to stand away from the left, must have wondered what (both literally and figuratively) was in the wind, but I played the ball to the left with a slight cut so that it swung down the wind and successfully reached the green. Then, I presume, judging from the applause, that the crowd understood.

All the same in playing up to the green, I would usually prefer to slice or pull *into* the wind. The tee-shot is one thing, but the stroke up to the green is a horse of quite another colour. And usually with a brassy, cleek, or iron, I should deal with a side wind from the right by playing with a slight cut so that the ball as it drops is leaning to some extent against the wind. The whole idea of the shot is to take advantage of the wind to make the ball drop dead on the green. It is the little run that ensues, that justifies the stroke, for if it were played with a pull, heaven knows where the ball would finish. Greens are not of a size that permits of any such liberties being taken.

With the wind from the left the brassy up to the green is much more difficult, it being always more difficult to bring off a pull with a wooden club, than a slice. However, the stroke has to be played, and with a pull it must be. When the occasion arises I aim to the right; I do not alter the position of the feet, but merely stand as I would for an ordinary stroke on a calm day. As with the tee-shot I keep the toe of the club out, and the hand comes over when striking the ball. The result is that the slice is prevented and a slight pull obtained. With the cleek and iron the stroke is exactly the same.

My own opinion regarding playing through the green in a wind is that the cleek is much the better club to use, for it is far easier to keep the ball down than with a wooden club, and I know perfectly well that it is possible to get just as far. Moreover, we are always afraid of jarring on the ground with a wooden club, but we have no such fear when using an iron. As I have already pointed out, against the wind especially, the club meets the ball whilst still descending, and as, after the ball is struck, it must still go forwards and downwards, it follows that the blade bites into the turf slightly in front of the ball. With an iron club we never funk the stroke.

Wind or no wind, I always believe in pitching the ball straight up to the hole, from anything under 120 yards, for if the ball is struck truly, the wind will not take it off the line in this short

distance. I know that as long as no bunker intervenes a number of players prefer to run it with an iron, and to this I can take no exception, but if we always pitch we are always prepared for the bunker, and have no need to put ourselves at a disadvantage by altering our style of play.

In a wind a good firm stance is essential, and there are occasions when the player who confesses to seventeen stones is to be envied. I shall always believe that bulk was, to a certain extent, responsible for Massy's win at Hoylake, Swing we ever so correctly, it avails us nothing, if we are unsteady on our feet.

Putting in a high wind is a painful phase of the game, but in this respect we inlanders are far better off than the players on seaside greens, for we can always hit our putts firmly, even down wind, whereas on those fiery seaside greens, it is almost impossible to guide the ball when one dare not hit it.

This discussion of play in a wind reminds me of a wager I once made at Ganton. It was on one awful Easter Monday, and after I had twitted several players on their scores, they came back at me with a bet that I could not do an 83. I took them on, and finished in 93! but I can fairly attribute this apparently 16 handicap score to the fact that not only was there a perfect hurricane raging, but the sand that was blowing over Ganton that day from the fields round about, made it almost impossible to keep my

eyes open. I know that I finished the round with the tears streaming down my face, and feeling uncommonly small. Around London, what is termed a gale, north country golfers would merely consider a good sailing breeze, for on some of the Yorkshire moorland courses, it is not an uncommon thing for a good drive against the wind to finish no more than twenty yards in front of the tee. However, golf under such conditions is not golf at all.

CHAPTER XVI

MIND AND MATTER

THE greatest difficulties of golf are purely mental ones. To the uninitiated, who completely fail to appreciate this, the game naturally seems contemptibly simple and easy. The cricketer who knows not golf is apt to be betrayed into invidious comparisons between the difficulty of hitting a moving ball and a ball at rest—as if even in his own game he would ever maintain that a slow bowler was necessarily easier to play than a fast one. For the mere fact of having as much time as you please to make up your mind exactly how you are going to play the shot—or to review all the ways you hope not to play it—is far from being an unmixed advantage.

Happy is the man whom long practice has taught to play his shots with a Duncanesque confidence in his ability to hit the ball exactly as he wishes every time. But your days may be long upon the links, and you may become one of the great ones of the game, without this gift ever being yours. Alec Herd, for instance, seems—if one may judge from his hesitation over his stance and repeated addressing of the ball—never

to play a shot without taking the greatest pains to make certain that every nerve and every muscle is in proper trim for the correct execution of the stroke. And even to the most confident and most experienced some time of stress in a big match, some critical hole in an important medal round, is apt to bring back the old doubt, the old unhappy imaginings, and at such times only the greatest self-command and concentration can save the player from disaster.

Fortunately, those mental processes which react so unfavourably upon our play are themselves capable of being influenced by purely physical impressions. That concentration of mind which makes more for good play than skill or long practice is often to be won by very simple aids.

Few players realise, for instance, to what an extent straightness is a mental rather than a physical question. If you imagine that to hit a straight ball you have only to make sure that your feet are the correct number of inches from the ball, and that your swing conforms to all the accepted canons of the art of driving, you are very far astray. You have missed out the most important factor of all—that subtle thing called *aim*. Unless you have a mental consciousness of the particular line along which you intend the ball to travel you run a big risk of failure, be your stance and swing never so perfect.

As a matter of fact, a player does not take up the same stance to within a fraction of

an inch shot after shot. And it is not necessary that he should do so. The sense of aim, by processes which I would be the last to attempt to analyse, will direct the delicate adjustment of stance and swing to the intended line with far greater accuracy than any more mechanical process of tracing mental diagrams or measuring distances is capable of.

But what so many golfers never pause to consider, is that the more exact and definite is their idea of the proper line, the more chance has their aiming faculty of doing its work with success. And I am inclined to believe that carelessness in this direction has more than a little to do with many a shot that swings out of line. The player who slices two drives in every three probably does so by reason of some fatal error in his style. But the man who is only guilty of this fault occasionally may find the true explanation in a lack of definiteness about the line. He is told, let us say, to drive a little to the left of the lighthouse, a horribly vague form of direction, which leaves him nothing definite to concentrate his attention upon. He takes up his stance accordingly; but, having done so, he half-unconsciously modifies his idea of the line, and without altering his stance prepares to drive much more nearly straight for the lighthouse than he at first intended. In short, he stands as for one line and hits along another: small wonder if he slices his shot as a result.

You get an excellent example of the working of this mental bias in what happens when a player who habitually slices attempts to allow for his slice. He stands further round, intending to drive to the left of the proper line, but the proper line occupies his mind more or less while he is playing his shot, and the divided aim produces a worse slice than ever. Or, again, you are at a hole which runs parallel to the boundary of the course on your right. Your stance is correct, you certainly have no intention of going out; and yet the fact that "out of bounds" is there influences the stroke, and that simply because you have permitted it to divide your mind. Whereas if you had concentrated your thoughts on driving up the centre, and pictured the stroke successful, you would have had no cause to tee another. But it is safe to say that when the line happens to be *on* the lighthouse, with no dangers to distract attention to either hand, the danger of falling between two stools disappears. The mark is too distinct and definite for any unconscious change of aim, and the straight drive is made correspondingly easier. The church spire at Northam, which gives the line at so many holes in the course of the round at Westward Ho! is an ideal guide for this purpose. And on the whole the inland golfer is a great deal better off in this direction than his coast-bred brother, for trees and chimney tops make a much more distinct and attention-compelling mark than a slight

guide-post dimly descried against a distant line of sand-hills.

The main thing in either case is to have a clear and definite impression of the line you mean to take, and that not only in driving, but in every other stroke. In approaching, you should aim, not at the green but at the pin ; if the hole is a blind one, do not hesitate to go forward until you can see the pin and choose some landmark which will give you as exact a line as possible. And on the putting green also, I believe you will putt straighter if you mark your line by some particular blade of grass on the way to the hole or at the edge of it, than if you putt simply for the hole itself. In short, you should remember all the time that accuracy of aim is not only a desirable thing in itself, but is a great factor in making for accuracy in the playing of the stroke.

The same line of argument applies, though not perhaps to the same extent, to the judgment of strength. How much the large putting greens which are the pride of some courses, these "gardens of inaccuracy" against which Mr. John L. Low inveighed, have often done to spoil the approach play of the men who learned their golf upon them. Many a man whose pitching is a tower of strength to-day, acquired it on some forsaken inland course whose pocket-handkerchief greens, surrounded by ill-kept turf, made careful judgment of the length of the pitch a matter of absolute necessity. For this reason if for no

other I am always in favour of having cross bunkers guarding the green. In the end of the day they assist us in approaching by teaching us to search out a spot on which to place our pitch, instead of playing with cheerful and inaccurate optimism at a wide expanse of naked green.

This theory may even be developed further, for there is scarcely room for dispute that it is of the greatest assistance to the mind in giving its instructions to the different muscles for the proper carrying out of the stroke, if we start with a clear vision—in our mind's eye, Horatio—of the whole flight of the ball from its leaving the face of the club until its coming to rest again. The professional never waits until he reaches his drive before beginning to consider what club to take, and what manner of stroke is required for his next. From the moment of leaving the tee, he is busy with the second, as yet unplayed. Unless when there is reason to suspect the nature of the lie, the club has already been decided upon before the ball is reached, and in his mind the stroke has been completed. When the golfer thinks out each shot beforehand in this manner, the actual playing of the stroke is rendered easier; the possibility of a fizzle never enters into his calculations. "A foot to the left of that knoll," he says to himself, "the ball must pitch"—and with this idea occupying his mind to the exclusion of everything else, it is not to be wondered at that he usually does exactly what he intends.

How often does it happen that a player, faced with a longish putt, is suddenly filled with the knowledge, the certainty, that he is going to hole it. He sees exactly the line it will take, the last curl in towards the hole, and when down it goes a second or two later, he regards himself almost with awe, as one gifted momentarily with the spirit of prophecy. But in so thinking he is confusing cause and effect. He did not see himself holing the putt because he was going to hole it, but on the contrary he holed it because he saw so plainly how it might be holed. And in other departments of the game as well as on the green the faculty of seeing exactly what you intend to do is of invaluable aid in the actual doing.

In many other ways it is possible to do away with some of those "mental hazards" which trap you more surely than ever physical bunker did. Who was it who always turned his back when a longer-driving opponent had the honour, lest peradventure, watching the other's drive, he should himself be tempted to press? Whoever it was, he was stronger by his power to conquer himself than he that taketh a city. Another safeguard of the same kind may be put into practice when you are playing from a tee which is close to a boundary fence, like that seventh tee at Muirfield from which the American Champion McDermott ruined his chances in the Open Championship of 1912, by pulling three drives in succession into Archerfield Wood. The obvious but

not the best course in such a case is to tee the ball at the side of the teeing ground farthest away from danger. More valuable by far, however, than this gain of a few yards, is the knowledge that you are, however slightly, hitting away from the danger zone, and I believe that the player who has doubts of himself will find it pay better to tee at the side of the teeing ground nearest to the danger so that the direction in which he has to play may lie away at as big an angle as possible from the line of the boundary. The difference is purely one of mental impression, but in golf mental impression counts for a good deal.

The thing for the golfer to aim at, of course, is to acquire such complete command over his own mental processes as to be able to concentrate his thoughts on what he intends to do, to the entire exclusion of what he is afraid he may do. The golfer who can accomplish that, possesses—like the competitor in a certain Amateur Championship who set out for his first round with a bottle of whisky among his paraphernalia, “just in case he should do a hole in one”—a great reserve of strength against every emergency.

It seems to me that the beginner in golf could usually do a great deal better than he does if he would realise something of the importance of this mental factor in the game, when he is still at the initial stage. Where it seems to me that so many players go wrong is in their failure to grasp the fact that practice in golf is of two distinct kinds,

equally necessary and desirable, but not easily to be attempted at the same time. We have not only to learn how to play each particular stroke, but we have so to exercise our faculties mental and physical that we may become accustomed to using these strokes and able to repeat them with confidence even under the strain of an important round. It is obvious that the former kind of practice ought to precede the latter; the player ought to learn how to play the stroke perfectly, and having done so, to endeavour to engrave that knowledge upon what I may call his muscular memory, that strange faculty, or combination of faculties, which enables the body to act almost automatically, upon the mere issue by the mind of the general order for the making of the stroke, without waiting for the detailed directions as to how exactly it is to be performed. The cricketer who sees a fast ball pitching outside of his off stump at just the right spot for his favourite crack past cover, is often conscious of no further action of the mind before he sees the ball being picked up on the boundary. Memory has associated just that combination of muscular efforts with that particular stroke and when the opportunity for the stroke offers, it is made on the instant perfectly mechanically and therefore perfectly surely. The same thing is possible in golf.

But only too frequently players, especially beginners, do their play an immense amount of harm by trying as it were to memorise their strokes

before they have acquired the knowledge how these strokes should be played. There is no doubt that in theory the best way to learn golf is to take up each stroke in turn, practise it with an instructor until you have assimilated a thorough knowledge of the correct way to play it, and then repeat it again and again, as schoolboys learn the conjugation of irregular verbs, until the memory has obtained too complete a hold of it to let it slip. Only then should you pass on to the next stroke, not forgetting to exercise yourself constantly in those you have already learned, until, like a juggler who picks up various articles in turn and adds them to the procession which he is keeping circling in the air—you at last have all your clubs under control and can practise, in the second sense of the word, to your heart's content.

Well, it is perhaps rather a tedious process (although I never thought it so when I began in Jersey), and human nature being what it is, I am not going to insist that beginners or anybody else should follow out such a programme to the bitter end. Most golfers at the commencement of their career are conscious neither of the difficulty of the game nor of the consuming desire to play it well which afterwards overtakes so many of them. Consequently they are only too keen to be playing the complete round and engaging in matches and medals. But—and this is the important thing—they ought to remember that the shot that is played with the sole object of perfecting the stroke

has a very different effect upon their future play from the shot that is played for the sake of the result achieved. In the one case they are acquiring a stroke; in the other they are making use of a stroke already more or less perfectly acquired. And every time they "make use of" a stroke they are confirming themselves in the way of playing it which they have adopted. That is why it is so essential that they should first make certain that they know what the correct way is.

Now I do not wish to say that a player does his game much harm by "making use of" the strokes which he has still only imperfectly acquired, in occasional matches or competitions. But unfortunately it has become the custom with the players of that modern school which is the product of the typical city club, to make every round a competition of some sort. The half crown on the match, and, still worse, the never failing card and pencil drawn out of the pocket after every hole, are your handicaps' worst enemies. For you cannot study to improve your game at the same time as you are concentrating your whole thought on getting the best results out of the game you have already got. And the result of their method is that they get no real practice at all.

I am a great believer in judicious experiment in golf, and I consider that an hour devoted to serious trial of some novel suggestion or careful practice in some not quite perfect stroke, is worth

twenty hours of hammering round the course in a so called friendly match. Let me just say a word on the subject of practice in general, for it is undoubtedly a matter which the average golfer manages very ill and in which he gets small return for the time and trouble he expends. Such practise gives the player his only chance of acquiring the greatest art of the links—the art of taking his stroke easily.

One curious but very common sort of experience seems to me to afford a remarkable proof of this. The player for the first time adopts, let us say, the overlapping grip, or tries to copy Tom Ball's stance on the green with his feet close together. The result is immediate success ; his drives are twenty yards longer, or his putts drop in to the hole as though it were the diameter of a soup tureen. And so endeth the first day. But the next day the new style is scarcely so successful ; and by the end of a week his drives are back to the old length or the putts are missed as before. And the golfer cannot understand how the new method should only work well for a while. The reason is simple enough. As long as he was only experimenting he was content to take things easy. Easiness begat success and success begat confidence. But later on the old constraint and the old anxiety returned to destroy the good that the change had wrought, and he drifted back into his old position. Many an experiment that seems to bear little fruit in the end would be of infinite

value to the player if he could only maintain that habit of taking the stroke easily, into which the change to the new method had for the time persuaded him.

My advice, to the beginner especially, but also to the player whose handicap is sufficiently low to make him anxious to lower it further and at the same time sufficiently high to leave plenty of room for improvement, is to try and play at least one round a week with his mind on the examination and improvement of his game rather than on his score or on the result of his match. It may mean sacrificing that round to a "purely friendly" match, or even to an unsociable "lonesome." But it is worth doing.

CHAPTER XVII

STRAIGHT TIPS

In a multitude of counsellors there is wisdom! I do not wish to suggest that my methods are the only possible ones, and in order that the inland golfer may have every chance of weighing up for himself the advantages of different theories as to the kind of clubs to use on city courses and the kind of shots to play, I wrote to some of the leading players, both amateur and professional, asking them to allow me to include in this book a brief note of the "tip" which they had found most helpful to themselves. I have to thank them most heartily for the valuable and interesting ideas which they have contributed to this chapter. Needless to say, golf being the game of infinite variety that it is, they do not all agree with my ideas, nor with one another. But the reader may find in this very disagreement, much that is both illuminating and instructive.

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On inland courses where one often finds the ball in rough grass off the fairway, I always prefer my brassy to an iron club if possible, as the wooden

club is less likely to turn in the hand when one hits the ball. Sometimes, however, you must use an iron club, and for this I have one club that I always find very useful. It is a fairly straight mashie, very heavy. It cuts through the rough quite easily, and being heavy, the ball goes a long way.

HARRY VARDON.

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Inland courses in the spring, in the autumn, and sometimes in the summer, call for much the same class of shots as seaside courses do, but in the winter months, they call for a class of golf which is entirely foreign to the golfer whose game has been fashioned on true seaside turf. Inland golf under winter conditions will at first prove a sore trial to the man who is uninitiated in its mysteries; but there are one or two golden principles which it is well to follow, the most important perhaps being to get the ball to rise in the air, and, moreover, to keep it in the air as long as possible, as there is much less resistance to be found up above, than there is on a heavy sticky surface. If there is *any* doubt about the probability of prevailing upon the ball to rise with a certain individual club do not use that club, take one with which you feel certain you can make it rise. Strokes along the carpet do not pay on inland courses in winter.

But, perhaps, the greatest secret of successful

play on inland courses under winter conditions lies in the knack of being able to hit approaches right up to the hole side. On heavy ground nine out of ten players when playing approaches, will be continually short of the hole, and, moreover, will really never notice that they are not hitting their approach shots sufficiently hard. The player who makes up his mind to play his approach shots for a position past the hole, will invariably defeat the player who is not playing the shots with such a determination in his mind.

Three things which it is well to remember when playing on inland courses when the ground is heavy are: Firstly, to try always to hit the ball in the air, and when playing through the green to use clubs which are well lofted. Secondly, to play all approaches for a position past the hole (some will probably go past the hole, but not nearly as many as the player expects), and thirdly, never to press, as the foothold on wet heavy turf is not nearly as secure as the foothold on dry firm turf.

H. H. HILTON.

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I am convinced that it is considerably more difficult to play golf well on an inland course than by the seaside. The reason of this is apparent to any one who cares to give the question a moment's thought. The ball "lies" closer to the ground in the former than in the latter, owing to the different character of the soil. As a natural

consequence it is more difficult to get the ball away cleanly from the more or less muddy "lie" in which the ball nestles close, than when the ball that "sits" up on the springy turf which is developed by the light, porous, sandy soil. I am speaking now of "through the green" play; the tee shot is much the same in both instances.

But if the wooden club play is difficult inland, I am positive the iron play is more so. For that reason I have always found it of advantage to use iron clubs with deep faces, as this gives one a greater margin for error; and in this direction who is perfect? Certainly not the writer. Therefore, use deep faced iron clubs; use them with a grim determination that will carry conviction to your opponent. Remember that the game "is aye fighting against ye!" as poor old Tom used to say; it is always on the lurk to give the player a deadly knock-out blow on the treacherous inland turf. I shall never forget the remark made to me once at St. Andrews by the old champion, Bob Martin. I had succeeded in getting the ball well away from a very "cuppy" lie. "Eh, laddie, ye hauled that yin out by the hair of the heid," ejaculated old Bob, who was standing near. I felt very proud of myself at the time, for praise from old Bob was of the nature of praise from Sir Hubert Stanley. But that is really the way of it. The low lying ball must be "hauled out," and this process can be the better accomplished

by deep-faced iron clubs if allied to a Napoleonic attitude.

J. H. TAYLOR.

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When you are driving badly and are not getting the ball up properly, try without altering the position of the feet, to let your head incline over to the right, dropping the shoulder slightly, and throwing the weight of the body more on the right foot. This will shift the position of the eyes often with good results.

J. E. LAIDLAY.

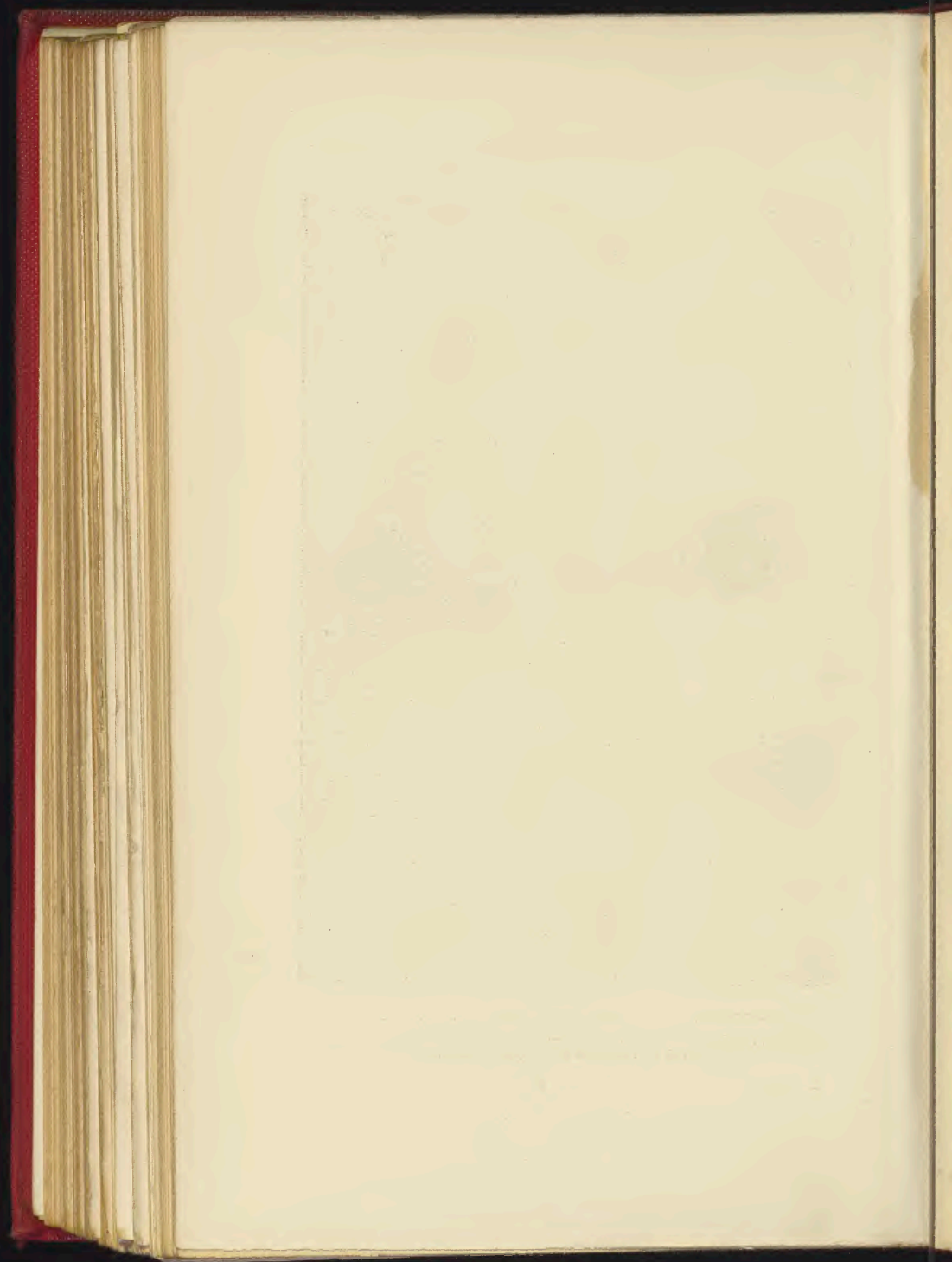
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It is often found that the ball lies more "su" on many an inland course, owing to the heavy, lumpy character of the soil. All clay courses have this feature to a marked degree. It is advisable, then, that the brassy should not only be rather more lofted than usual, but should also be slightly rounded at the toe and heel, particularly the latter, underneath the club, so that, when soled, it suits any lie. The same applies more or less, according to their length of face, to all clubs used for playing through the green. On a very grassy course rather deep-faced clubs should be used, whilst the reverse is the case when playing on a "bare" course. For playing out of long grass a club should be



PUTTING ; THE FINISH OF THE BACK SWING.

Observe that the club has swung inside the line from the ball to the hole and that the face of the club is turned slightly outwards.



used which has the lower edge of the blade of almost razorlike sharpness, but this club must never be used through the fairway or in a sand bunker.

E. A. LASSEN.

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Most of our inland courses are on the soft and greasy side in winter. I have found that a narrow-faced brassy and spoon are the most serviceable clubs at these times, as the ball, nine times out of ten, is lying very close to the ground. The clubs require to be slightly rounded in the sole so as they get into the ball more easily than a straight or flat sole. I have found this style of club much easier to pick up a ball with than the deep faces I play with in summer. Of course the ball sits up better when the grass is growing, which allows a deep face more easily to pick the ball up. On the green I use a more lofted putter as I find the ball often lies very much cupped at times, and you get rougher ground to putt over than in summer, with the result that putting with a straight-faced putter becomes very difficult.

ALEX. HERD.

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The best tip I can give to an inland golfer is that whenever it is possible he should play on a seaside course.

EDWARD BLACKWELL.

Golf on most inland courses has two distinct periods: the "Stone Age" say from mid March to mid October, and the "Mud Age" the other parts of the year. During the "Stone Age" there is no material difference in the play on all well-kept inland and seaside greens, but during the "Mud Age" my advice is not to play at all on those courses of the clayey variety, but if for reasons of health, exercise or pleasure (?) the player insists on following his favourite pastime, let him employ an entirely different set of clubs, discard his driver, and use a brassy. This, and all such winter clubs should have a very decided loft, and be, on the whole, rather shorter and heavier than those used at other times. My reason for suggesting this change of clubs is that when the turf is soft and puddingy, however well equipped the player's shoes may be with nails, in any stroke, requiring any force or effort, there is always the feeling of give and insecurity of foothold, a fatal and continuous destroyer of that confidence so necessary in the playing of all strokes; then when the "Stone Age" arrives, or the seaside green, with its prim turf, is visited, the player will not have the same feelings of misgiving in using his favourite set of weapons after their temporary retirement.

HERBERT E. TAYLOR.

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The inland course in winter is so totally different to play from the summer one, that I find it advisable to make a few changes in my set of clubs. When the course is wet and heavy I like to play my shots up to the hole with a deep-faced iron with a strong shaft in it. In summer when there is a lot of run on the ball my favourite club is a spoon. I find I can pick the ball up so much cleaner and can get the ball to stop much quicker than I can off an iron club.

JACK WHITE.

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It is a little difficult to devise any "tip" particularly applicable to inland golf, and the only shot I can think of, as having been of some little use to me, is that which I am pleased to call my "scuffle" with a mashie. It always seems to me that in winter time, with the ground heavy, the shots that have to be played from some little way beyond the confines of the putting green are particularly puzzling. For one thing, the lies are often bad, the ball may be surrounded by worm casts or sunk in mud, and an attempt to pitch may end in an ignominious "fluff." Again, even if you can hit the ball clean, there is much difficulty as to where you are to pitch it; if you pitch it six inches short of the green, it may hit a bump and stop abruptly. It is in these circumstances that I

find it useful to scuffle the ball along the ground with mashie or lofting iron. The shot is, as far as I can describe it, a kind of stiff-wristed putt. I personally hold the club low down on the shaft and stand with the ball almost opposite the left foot. If you played such a stroke with a putter you would simply "dunt" the ball into the mud, but the loft on the face of the club prevents that and generally sends the ball slithering successfully between the worm-casts. It is essential, I think, to play the shot with a good, firm, stiff wrist, and to follow well through. In conclusion, I should, perhaps, add that kind friends have told me that all I really do is to take my mashie and top the ball with it. Very likely they are right.

BERNARD DARWIN.

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The most natural shot in golf is, I think, the slice, and the reason is that it is natural to sway the body when hitting. What I find causes us to sway in spite of ourselves, is that the hands are held too high in addressing the ball. This causes the club-head to go straight back from the ball, sometimes outside of it, with the result that the body sways to the right, and the stroke is hopeless. It may be that the cause of the hands being held too high is that the club is too upright. A good test of whether the club is

suited to the player is to sole it in the ordinary way as if addressing the ball. Then if the second joint of the first finger of the left hand cannot be seen, the club is too upright. Get a club which will allow you to start your upward swing with your hands nearer the ground, and the slice will not come nearly so easily.

GEORGE DUNCAN.

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As one who has played a good deal on inland courses, especially heather ones, I have found the following hints useful: When the ball lies in deep heather, the only way to get it out is to take the niblick straight up and bring it down almost perpendicularly, in which case the ball comes out far better than by trying to cut through the heather. Then, again, when the ball lies in short heather, I find a brassie much better than an iron club, and the lighter one hits at the ball the better it comes out. Also, when one has to play a short chip shot out of heather, the club must be grasped very tightly and double the force used to what one would use if lying in the open.

S. MURE FERGUSSON.

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There are many things to weigh before hitting the ball on the green, and it is advisable, then,

never to hurry your stroke, but rather make up your mind about the pace of the green, the wind, if any, and the amount of fall to be allowed for. I maintain that the line of the putt should only be studied from the ball to the hole. You will only become confused if you look both ways, as the line never appears the same, and meanwhile the eye is getting tired by waiting too long. In playing the stroke, keep the left elbow well out, and put your weight on the right foot, which helps to prevent the body and head going forward too soon. And—what I consider the most important point of all—let the putter follow right through. Never think you are going to miss a putt, however difficult, but rather say to yourself—"this is going down." All this seems, on paper, a lot to think about before making the stroke, but, with a little practice, all can be thought out in a very few seconds.

C. C. AYLMER.

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I dislike the word tip most heartily; it seems to me a very dangerous word for professors of golf to use, and, besides, I distinctly remember writing "Beware of Tipsters." My desire, therefore, is to offer advice. First let me point out that "Inland Courses" really differ from each other every bit as much as one set of clubs differs from another. Secondly, each course presents

a set of problems to the players particularly its own, evolved partly by its geographical position and partly by the idiosyncrasies of the green committee. There is, to my mind, only one trustworthy method of solving these problems, and that is—acquiring the habit of hitting the ball perfectly true. Never mind about fancy shots. Don't worry about distance. Practice, practice, and practice, until you feel supremely confident of hitting the ball from the centre of the club-head; go slowly at first—you cannot expect to gain this confidence in a week or so; but stick to it, and it will come at last; and then you will be well on the way to becoming a golfer, and not merely one who plays golf. Remember—No digging! No slogging! Don't try to hit the ball off the earth!

J. SHERLOCK.

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The best "tip" I know, when playing through the green or approaching, is to look at a spot about two inches in front of the ball, and keep your eye fixed on that spot until your club has taken away the turf you were looking at. It is extraordinary how easily the ball will come away from really bad lies, and I find there is less inducement to look up too soon than is the case when looking at the ball. A brassy with a very

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shallow face is a good club to carry when the lies are bad.

SIDNEY H. FRY.

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The tip which I have found most useful is to look at the top of the ball when playing from a good lie in a bunker. Many players seem to think that the only club to use in a bunker is a niblick, no matter how the ball is lying; but by looking at the top of the ball and taking ordinary care they can use any club. Of course the bank of the bunker must be taken into consideration.

CECIL LEITCH.

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A great difficulty which often presents itself when playing a round over an inland course is a short pitch out of the long, rank grass which one so often finds bordering the putting greens on this type of ground, and which is entirely different, both in its nature and texture, from any grass found by the seaside. I have always found a most excellent method of negotiating this difficulty is to hold the club as short as is conveniently possible and hit hard. It is quite extraordinary with what ease and accuracy the ball may be played from such a lie by employing this method.

I entirely endorse Mr. Lassen's opinion as to the use of clubs which are deeper in the face and more rounded in the sole for use on "inland greens" generally. I even go further, and state it as my opinion that it is far more efficient, invariably, to use an iron club in negotiating a long shot up to the hole on greens which are "really heavy" in preference to a wooden one. My reason is that the texture of the soil is so india-rubber like that it is a necessity for the success of the shot that the ball should be made to rise quickly, otherwise the stiffness of the soil with which the under-surface of the advancing ball, on the hole side, will almost certainly come in contact, is very apt to impart all sorts of queer spins, which result in an unaccountable pull or slice, as the case may be, at the end of the flight, be the ball struck ever so accurately.

I am a firm believer in the inadvisability of attempting anything in the nature of a "push shot" when the ground is "really heavy." I believe that an ordinary lofted stroke, played straight at the hole, will be found to meet with far greater and more consistent success.

C. V. L. HOOMAN.

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The best hint I know of is to drive and swing as easily as you can. By doing so you will

find the remaining part of the game much simpler.

WILLIE FERNIE.

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A "tip" which I have proved most useful in my case, when playing on inland courses, is this : As most inland courses are laid out, a drive that has a little draw on it (which means a long run on pitching) is far more risky than one with a little push which pulls up quickly on pitching. Therefore I always try to get a drive of this description. You get the added advantage of a practically uniform length and therefore at most holes the same sort of iron shot for a second. If you have any confidence with your irons the slight loss of distance is no drawback. Of course, on seaside courses the exact opposite obtains and I have always found on first playing at St. Andrews after a period of inland golf that I had lost from thirty to forty yards. But I would never hesitate to sacrifice this on an inland links for the great advantage of being on the course.

GUY CAMPBELL.

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Things work out the contrary way at golf. So if you are inclined to slice, don't try to play the ball to the *left* of the line, but boldly play to the *right* ; in fact practice to *push the ball out to the*

right of the line of your stance. This is the only radical and lasting cure for slicing.

Then in all ordinary pitching shots, half, three-quarter, and full, where the ball is required to go well up into the air, don't address the ball with the face of the club laid back, because the arms and wrists turn the opposite way in coming down to the ball. Rather address the ball with the face turned a little in and you will find that if the arms and wrists are used freely, without undue stiffening of the muscles, they will turn naturally on the down stroke and the loft will come off successfully. When a low, running shot is wanted address the ball with the face laid well back and the arms and wrists will turn of themselves and do what is required.

Two other little "tips" are: When an extra carry is wanted, with a wooden club especially, try slackening the grip of the right hand during the address and up swing. In lofting a stymie don't lift the mashie or niblick off the grass much, let it go back almost touching the ground and the same forward, in fact somewhat like a putt, and don't lay the face of the club back.

JOHN R. GAIRDNER.

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For inland courses every club should be made deeper in the face. You seem somehow to pick up the ball better with a deep faced club. The

clubs should also be slightly more lofted than usual so that they could suit any bad lie. On a hard, bare, seaside course the narrow-faced club should be used.

A. KIRKALDY.

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On inland courses, always take a club that you know you can get past the hole with when you have a shot to play from within reach of the putting green.

W. E. FAIRLIE.

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The state of the course on which I played habitually some years ago induced me to abandon my deep faced irons in favour of shallow clubs. I found that for all purposes I made better strokes with the latter. A broad sole helped me to raise the ball quickly out of mud and give it the necessary spin to check it on the green. The narrowness of the face made one take infinite care in addressing the ball and in trying to strike it in the exact spot required. Accuracy thus became more a matter of course than it would otherwise have been.

R. H. DE MONTMORENCY.

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Since golf is so complicated and there are so many things to do and so many movements to control, it is advisable if possible to find some fixed method of producing strokes and be able to repeat them. Even after the player has learned to play an ordinary game, there is generally the great difficulty of regulating the length of swing according to the distance required, and at the same time guiding the ball in the right direction. It will be found of very great importance when actually playing at the pin to regulate the length of backward movement from the position of the feet. For instance if the distance be 20 to 50 yards, by facing the hole with both shoulders it will be found possible to take the club fairly straight only a certain distance both backward and forward without any body movement; should the distance be 75 to 100 yards or so then the stance is not quite so open, naturally allowing just a fraction of movement to complete the upward swing for extra distance required. If the distance is say 120 to 150 then the stance would be still less open thus allowing just a little more turn to complete the upward movement, so that with a little practice it will be found possible to swing according to the position of feet. Apart from regulating the upward swing from these positions it will be found that the club head can be directed longer and further along the line of flight from the right shoulder, which assists the hands and wrists further through, than if the stance were square.

It may be pointed out that the shorter the stroke the closer the feet should be.

WILFRED E. REID.

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A thing which I believe is not generally known, but which I have found by experience very useful, is this: When driving against a strong wind a great many players instruct their caddie to make their tee slightly lower than usual. Now this, I think, is wrong; if anything, the tee should be made a trifle higher, and the player should slightly turn the face of the club over, and when struck the ball will go away with a lower trajectory without being foundered.

V. A. POLLOCK.

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The tip I have found most useful in playing on heavy inland greens is to use shorter, lighter, and whippier clubs—irons as well as driver and brassy. The wrists work easier with the light, springy club, and this is essential to picking the ball up out of heavy lies. The brassy should also be deeper in the face and more lofted than is usual on a seaside course.

E. MARTIN SMITH.

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On inland courses I find that the habit of using a short club, standing more up to the ball, and swinging more uprightly, has helped me more than anything else I have tried.

L. B. AYTON.

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For long putts I always treat the hole, not as a circle of four and a quarter inches, but as one of eight feet, with the hole, of course, in the centre and I try to leave the ball, within this circle, that is within four feet of the hole, short or past, to the right or to the left. The most important thing about putting seems to me to be the strength, and the player who averages the strength of his long putts well will almost always score over the player who goes for the hole. With the present balls putting is, to my mind, quite a different thing from what it was with the hard solids. With the latter a slight miss-hit (and very few putts were really perfectly struck by most amateurs) always reduced the strength of the putt to a very appreciable degree. Now a miss-hit does not matter nearly so much (as regards strength), and one frequently sees a ball curiously struck careering merrily past the hole. Amateurs, to my mind, pay for too much attention to the line and leave the strength to fortune. My motto is; pay most attention to strength and let the line take care of itself more or less. Holing a putt of ten feet

or more I consider lucky. For holing-out, the formerly well-established dictum, "play for the back of the hole," seems a dangerous practice now, and I believe it pays to try and get in without hitting the back of the hole.

H. C. ELLIS.

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On an inland golf course it is difficult and sometimes hazardous to put back spin on an iron shot by taking a piece of turf with the ball. Exactly the same result can be obtained by keeping the right arm absolutely stiff and letting the fingers of the right hand go loose at the exact second when the club-head comes in contact with the ball. This expedient will make even a full iron shot stop absolutely dead on the green, even when picked up perfectly cleanly from the grass.

DOROTHY CAMPBELL HURD.

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Let the last look while addressing the ball, just before you start the club on the backward swing, be at the centre of the course or at the spot towards which you intend to play. If the course is invisible, select some cloud in the sky, some tree or any definite mark in the right direction, and play straight towards it. The arms unconsciously follow the mind.

ROBERT HARRIS.

In inland golf it is always necessary to use rather deeper faced clubs, especially in the case of the mashie and irons. The player who tries to use a narrow-faced club in the wet season runs a great risk of fluffing his shots by slipping the club underneath the ball.

TOM BALL.

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On inland courses (1) use a fairly well-lofted driver off the tee, for, as there is practically no run, whether the ball is hit high or low, a good carry is essential; (2) use a spoon through the green in preference to a brassy, and a good stiff iron in place of a cleek; (3) use a large ball.

FRANK WOOLLEY.

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On inland courses always tee on sand and not on grass at a short hole. The amount of turf that can be taken on a seaside course may vary a little one way or another without hindering the shot, but on an inland course if too much is lifted the result is invariably bad.

C. B. MACFARLANE.

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Some years ago I had severe trouble with my bunker shots, but I practised every conceivable shot out of bunkers until I became sure of it.

Once the bunker stroke is passably learned it means that your game has improved by strokes. The niblick should not be adhered to always as the implement for use in bunkers. In favourable circumstances, when the lie is well back from the face, the mashie or even the iron may be used with effect.

C. H. MAYO.

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It seems to me that the most common cause of bad shots is that the player has not taken sufficient care that his hands are *not* in front of the ball in addressing it. As a result the hands come through before the head of the club reaches the ball ; the eye, which by nature works in conjunction with the hands, is raised before the actual impact ; and the stroke is badly finished or mis-timed.

E. W. SCRATTON.

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I find that the most useful thing is to see that my club lies naturally, that my position is comfortable, and that the club ascends and descends as nearly as may be on the same line.

CHARLES EVANS, JR.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE COMPLETE ROUND

THUS far I have been dealing simply with individual strokes, but I would be doing a grave injustice to the young golfer if I were to leave him with the impression that there is nothing more required of him than the ability to execute these with more or less accuracy. There was sound wisdom in the St. Andrews caddie's contemptuous summing up of the capacities of a worthy professor, for whom he regularly carried. "He may be a'richt at the mathematics, but it takes a man wi' a heid to play gowf." And it is just because it takes a man with a head to play golf that your experienced veterans so frequently triumph over younger and seemingly stronger opponents.

The first thing you have to learn is to know your own game. How many men are there, for instance, who cannot tell, even approximately, the distance in yards which they can carry with a full drive, a full cleek, a full iron. They have never taken the slightest trouble to observe the length of the holes they know, and they pay for their ignorance when they come to play at the holes they do not know, when often the number

of yards indicated on the card or the side of the tee box is the only means they have of checking the advice of a not too reliable caddie. Yet this particular information is as easily obtained as it is useful, and as soon as a player's game has become sufficiently developed, he ought to make a point of posting himself up in the approximate distance he gets with each of his strokes.

But apart from any question of yardage, many players betray an incredible ignorance of their own abilities and disabilities. I am simply staggered sometimes to see how long handicap men—and sometimes men whose handicaps are not long—will blindly let fly with a brassy straight for a hazard which they could not carry one time out of a hundred. The only thing that can possibly save them from being trapped is if they fail to get their shot away properly; and yet the advisability of playing short seems to be the very last thing to enter what they are pleased to call their minds. I quite admit that the only way of learning to carry bunkers is to go for them, but this does not mean swiping desperately into hazards that there is no chance of carrying.

Knowing what you *can* do is an essential preliminary to making up your mind on the very important question of what you intend to do. When the novice begins to combine the various strokes he has acquired into a complete "round," either in match or medal, he is forced to grasp the fact that in golf, as in billiards, it is essential

to play for position, and that he should never make a stroke without due consideration of how it will leave him situated for the one that is to follow.

In coming to a strange course of the inland variety the golfer has always much to learn. Take only the little matter of judging distance. I grant you that to begin with the level expanses of the seaside courses are difficult enough to judge, because there are so few landmarks to break up the foreground and afford a basis of measurement to the eye. But when you have once learned how to gauge distances on such a course you have learnt it for all time. On the other hand the uphill and downhill holes on the kind of inland course which drew from Andrew Kirkaldy the bitter complaint that he was only a golfer, not a goat, are at all times exceedingly deceptive, as witness Alec Herd's famous shot at the last hole at Cromer. This last hole lies (or lay, for the round has since been altered considerably) down a steep hill from a tee on the top of the cliff to a green in the hollow in front of the club-house. Herd, coming to the hole for the first time, and acting on the advice of his caddie, took his brassy and had the unusual satisfaction of carrying not only the green but also the club-house beyond, and so leaving himself with one of the most complete stymies for his second shot, that has ever fallen to the lot of mortal man.

But whether you are playing over a course for

the first or the fiftieth time, it is your own power of observation that counts. Mr. John Ball is said to know each particular blade of grass at Hoylake by name, and the result is that he was able on one occasion for a wager to go round the course *in a fog* in 81 strokes and take under two hours and a quarter in the doing of it—a striking proof of the complete acquaintance with a course which long practice can give. Every shot you make, whether successful or unsuccessful, should be a guide for your play on the next occasion when the same or nearly the same shot presents itself. After you have played the short hole half a dozen times you ought to know exactly what club and what stroke you require to reach it. And similarly if not quite so obviously with other strokes.

You must know your own game ; you must know the course ; you must also know the rules. In this respect I think that most amateurs could with advantage learn something from the paid players, not because the latter know the rules any more thoroughly (for they don't) but because in most cases the professionals have more of the ancient tradition of the game, which teaches that every ball ought to be played where it lies, and that exceptions are only to be taken advantage of when the player is sure of his right to do so. An example of the kind of thing I mean occurred in a big tournament at Turnberry, when at what was then the first hole, George Duncan

found his drive in a rabbit scrape. In his usual impetuous style he marched up to his ball, made up his mind that it was impossible to get out forwards and chipped back on to the fairway, long before the panting referee had had time to notice what had happened and draw Duncan's attention to a local rule which would have entitled him to lift without penalty. Duncan had led the field the first round, and this incident had probably more than a little to do with his loss of the lead, because someone was ill-advised enough to tell him of the local rule when it was too late, and naturally the chagrin of discovering that he had thrown away a stroke unnecessarily, did not help his play at the next few holes.

This is just the sort of accident that brings home to us the reasons annexed to a piece of advice of which Mr. W. J. Travis proved the wisdom on a famous occasion at Sandwich: Never go out in any competition on a strange course without making yourself master of the local rules. All the same, Duncan's was a mistake on the right side, and I make bold to say that it is just the sort of mistake that the modern amateur is not capable of making—more's the pity. There is too much of the spirit of "What can I do here" about the modern golfer, who seems to regard the rules as existing principally for the purpose of making his round easier for him. If everyone were to proceed upon the simple assumption that all cases of doubt and difficulty are to be decided

against the player, golf would be a much simpler game and the Rules of Golf Committee would perish of inanition.

The Code is admittedly both long and complicated. In a sense its very length and complexity are a tribute to the importance of inland golf, whose needs have been the occasion of the greater part of the additions and amplifications of the original rules, and I am not going to say that every golfer ought to have them all at his finger ends. What I do suggest is that he should at least keep them within reach of the said fingers by carrying in his golf jacket a copy of the Code, of which there are no lack of pocket editions to be obtained. Certain of the rules, however, apply to circumstances which occur with such frequency, that the player ought to make sure that he understands them completely. Naturally the major portion of these he will become acquainted with, very early in the ordinary course of play. But there are one or two important points regarding which there is so much misapprehension that a word or two about them can scarcely be out of place.

It is absolutely necessary to know, for instance, just what obstructions you may and may not move before playing your stroke. In the first place you are always entitled to remove any "loose impediment"—that is, anything not fixed or growing—lying within twenty yards of the hole to which you are playing, and not in a hazard. (It should be specially noticed

that the words "putting-green" in the rules always mean the whole ground, exclusive of hazards, within twenty yards of the hole.) This removal can only be accomplished in one way, by lifting the obstruction with the hand; except in the case of dung, worm-casts, snow and ice, which, it is specially provided, may be scraped aside with a club, provided the club is not laid with more than its own weight upon the ground. Again, "any flag-stick, guide-flag, movable guide-post, wheelbarrow, tool, roller, grass-cutter, box, vehicle, or similar obstruction" may be removed without penalty anywhere. Both obstructions on the green and flag-sticks and so forth can be removed, no matter where the player's ball may be or how great the distance between the ball and the impediment.

Besides this, any loose obstruction within a club-length of the ball can be moved, always provided that neither the ball nor the impediment is lying in a hazard. (Some golfers have been known to carry drivers with shafts of inordinate length for the purpose of measuring the area within which loose impediments may be moved, but I do not recommend this.) Do not forget also that through the green if the ball should move after the loose impediment has been touched by the player it counts as a stroke, and the same thing applies on the putting-green unless the impediment is more than six inches away from the ball.

Another subject with regard to which most golfers are distinguished by a highly discreditable ignorance is water. A very common source of error is the failure to recognize that the procedure when the ball lies or is lost in casual water in a hazard is precisely the same as when it lies or is lost in a recognized water hazard. In both cases the player who is not minded to take the risk of playing from the water is entitled to lift under a penalty of one stroke, and drop the ball either in the hazard behind the spot where the ball entered the water, or outside the hazard behind the spot where the ball crossed the edge of the hazard. When the ball lies or is lost in casual water through the green, or lies in such a position that the casual water prevents the player taking up his stance, the ball may be lifted and dropped without penalty within two club lengths of the margin of the water, as near as possible to where the ball lay, but not nearer the hole. On the putting green, in the same circumstances, or where casual water intervenes between the ball on the green and the hole, the ball may be lifted and placed in the nearest position, not nearer the hole, which allows a pathway free from casual water between ball and hole.

The case of a ball being accidentally deflected or displaced by an agency outside the match is one which occurs fairly frequently, and the rules governing it are not always understood.

A ball in motion stopped or turned aside by an agency outside the match must be played where it lies, but a ball that has come to rest and is afterwards displaced must be dropped—or on the putting green, placed—as near as possible to its original position. A ball lodging in anything moving must be dropped—or on the putting green, placed—as near as possible to the spot where the object was when the ball lodged in it. When in match play a player's ball on the green is struck and displaced by the ball of his opponent, the player may either replace it or play it where it lies, as seems best to him.

I might go on almost indefinitely calling attention to rules on which the ideas of the average player are distinctly hazy, not to use any stronger expression. But I have mentioned those specially because they crop up continually in ordinary play. For the hundred and one other little incidents which may disturb the even tenor of his way, the golfer can adopt no safer rule than never to take advantage of any provision in his favour without being able to cite chapter and verse for it.

I have borrowed one maxim from billiards; let me borrow another from bridge. Both in match play and in medal play, but especially in the former, it is advisable to *play to the score*. Most players, unfortunately, allow their play to be influenced by the state of the game in a totally

wrong way, taking things too easily at the beginning because they have still many holes before them, and slacking off if they happen to get a few holes ahead—often with the result that they find themselves suddenly a few holes behind. But there are occasions when there is something more in the game than merely trying to get down in the fewest possible strokes. Harry Vardon has put it on record that when he won his first Open Championship at Muirfield in 1896 he was left at the last hole with a 4 to get to beat J. H. Taylor who had been playing some distance ahead of him. Vardon took some time to make up his mind whether or not to essay the difficult carry over the bunker guarding the green with his second but eventually he decided to play for safety and be content with a tie. His tactics were justified by the event, for as all the world knows he won the play off on the following day.

This sort of problem does not present itself very often in medal play, since usually you can have no notion of how the other players are doing, but in matches it continually occurs. Your opponent puts a full brassy within a yard or so of the hole so as to leave himself a possible 3 and a certain 4. The carry is one which you do not usually attempt but the chance that you will be able to pitch dead and that he will miss his putt is too slender for you to trust to it. There is nothing for it but to go for the green and hope for the best. Or your opponent puts the

odd, his second, hard up against the bank of a bunker which you can carry with ease. The green, however, is just about as far away as you can possibly reach and you are conscious that the effort to get the little extra distance required may be the means of depositing you in the bunker beside your foe. He is almost certain to require a 6; it will only be good tactics on your part to make sure of getting over the bunker and leaving yourself safe for a 5. At the same time "safety" play can be overdone. I shall never forget the agony with which in one Amateur Championship the friends of a certain famous amateur watched him doing his best to fritter away a long lead by play that was pusillanimous rather than safe against an opponent who had obviously made up his mind to go for everything.

The state of the game should also be regarded as well as the state of the particular hole which is being played. Risks that would be unforgivable at any other time are fully justified when you are downy three down.

CHAPTER XIX

SOME FAMOUS INLAND COURSES

It has become an established custom that the man who would write a book on golf must include therein a chapter upon the famous courses and their different characteristics. And I think I should be doing ill by inland golf if I were to omit the opportunity of making some sort of reference to the leading courses of the great inland cities, the more so that they have received somewhat scurvy treatment in this direction in the past. Naturally, I begin with the hub of the world, where are not only the busiest of inland courses, but the best. It is difficult to know just what courses are to be included as falling within its sphere of influence, but the number of those which I think can fairly be described as London courses is over the century, and is every year being added to. Many of these are in every way as good as the average seaside links, and one or two of them almost challenge comparison even with the links on the Championship rota.

Sunningdale I consider to be indisputably the finest inland course I have ever played over. Its turf is not perhaps so superlatively good as that

of Ganton—which I would place next in order of merit, with Walton Heath a good third—but as a test of golf it is fit to rank with all but two or three of even the great seaside links. It possesses the essential quality of the true Championship course, the power of bringing out the slightest difference in point of skill or of form between one first-class player and another. I speak feelingly, for I have twice been defeated in the final round of the *News of the World* Tournament there, and both times I was playing very well too. The beauty of that undulating stretch of heather is the number of fine two-shot holes, at which the shadow of a mistake turns the par 4 into a 5—unless, of course, you happen to be James Braid, and do as he did when he beat me in the final of the first *News of the World* Tournament, put a herculean iron shot on to the tenth green from a bunker almost a full shot away and then hole your putt for a 3. The admirable disposition of the bunkers in front of the tees gives the man who can produce a long-carrying ball his due reward, and I think there is no course in the world, unless it be St. Andrews itself, where approach play is more severely tested and more justly rewarded or punished according to its deserts.

Walton Heath is another heather course that is well fitted to try the golf of champions. The great tournament which is, in fact if not in name, the Professional Championship of Great Britain is held in turn at Sunningdale, Mid-Surrey, and

Walton Heath, and each one of the three has long ago proved its adequacy as a test of the very best golf. A feature of Walton Heath, as of Sunningdale, is the number of excellent long holes (there are nine of 400 yards or over), and though I think that Sunningdale has more of the heroic quality, in one respect, at any rate, Walton Heath is entitled to bear the palm, for its short holes, as a set, are about the best that I know on any inland course; the Sunningdale short holes, good as they are, are just a little lacking in appeal to the imagination.

The third of the trio, and the great example of park golf in London, is the course of the Mid-Surrey Club on the Old Deer Park at Richmond. The turf through the green is velvet, the putting areas green baize, and the whole course has been laid out with surpassing skill. Yet in its original state I should not have dreamed of placing it on a level with the two heather courses, for it was flat, distressingly artificial, and altogether uninspiring. But the genius of the Mid-Surrey architects has changed all that. Even yet there is not a natural hazard on the course, but it has been covered with grassy "'umps and 'ollers" more natural than nature itself. The reproach of flatness and insipidity is for ever done away, and the originators of the greatest revolution in course architecture that has ever been, can now survey conquered nature like second Napoleons from the heights of their miniature Alps.

The importance of this new Mid-Surrey style of bunkering to inland golf is so great that I have thought it worthy of a chapter to itself. In the meantime, I must not omit to refer to another remarkable development in metropolitan golf—the “seaside inland course,” of which my own course at Oxhey is a good example. The feature of it is that it is laid out on soil in which large tracts of natural sandy deposits have made it possible for the architect to imitate the character of the seaside links with considerable faithfulness. Oxhey is too young yet to have quite come into its own, but I believe it has the makings of one of the finest courses in London. What is more it is “built for its growth”; even the rapid development of the rubber-cored ball will take some time to make its influence felt on Oxhey.

In the provinces, the growth of inland golf has been only less rapid than in the capital. Yorkshire, especially in and around Leeds, Sheffield, Hull, and Bradford, possesses an extraordinarily large number of excellent greens, and has at least one that is more than excellent—I mean the course of my own old club at Ganton. I am afraid that no one will be very ready to accept any remarks of mine upon the merits of Ganton as being perfectly unbiassed. But with every desire to be impartial, I have never had reason to depart from my conviction that the course where I spent so many pleasant years is surpassed by Sunningdale alone of all the inland

courses I have visited. And even Sunningdale is only superior by reason of the splendid test of first-class golf which it affords, for the turf at Ganton is the finest I have ever seen away from the sea-shore. Moreover, Ganton can claim to have the most stupendous hazard found on any inland course—the huge natural sand-bunker which strikes terror into the heart of the timid driver on the seventeenth and eighteenth tees, and rivals the famous Cape Bunker at Westward Ho! for the immensity and the irregularity of it. Whether it be that the sea at one time came as far inland as this I do not know, but the fact remains that Ganton possesses many of the features usually associated with seaside links, and there are few bad shots which do not meet their due reward in sand or whin. With the exception of the great bunker I have already spoken of, the bunkers are all of human devising, and there is no lack of them, both cross bunkers and pots. Altogether, it is a fine test of golf, and there are times when I doubt if even Sunningdale, with all its charms—— But it is time we were moving onward.

Round Manchester new courses have been springing up almost as rapidly as round London itself. Recently the Manchester Club, which traces its descent back to the year 1818 and is in fact the second oldest club in England, was forced to leave its ancient home at Trafford Park and establish its local habitation and its name at

Hopwood, where, I am told, the new course is rapidly developing into a very fine example of inland golf. Timperley, where George Duncan was professional for some time before he made the great trek southwards, is one of several excellent courses on the Cheshire side of Manchester.

I have a very high opinion of the course of the Notts Golf Club at Hollinwell, which I first visited when the finals of the *News of the World* Tournament were played there in 1906. The course is laid out in a wide valley, where, as at Ganton, there is no lack of good natural sand. The turf, except for two or three holes just after the turn, is very fine, and the fairway is beset with plenty of bunkers to trap the unwary. The weakness of the course is, perhaps the light punishment which it inflicts upon the man who gets off the line, for it must be confessed that at one or two holes the rough—falsely so called—affords as good lies as the greatest grumbler could desire. When I last played over the course there were one or two rather indifferent holes with blind drives towards greens cut out of the side of the slope above the course. But with the taking in of ground for three new holes to the west of club-house, the blind drives and the greater part of the hill climbing have been done away with.

Birmingham is the most utterly inland, if I may put it so, of all the great golfing centres and there are few of its many courses where the

player really gets a chance to forget that he is in a neighbourhood which has been fittingly described as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. It is a characteristic feature of golf in the great manufacturing cities that the ball rapidly assumes that peculiar colour which has been called a very dark white, but in Birmingham, it is apt to be discovered at the home hole looking like a cross between a golf ball and the ace of spades. Yet the fact that in Messrs. F. A. Woolley, F. C. Carr, and C. A. Palmer, the capital of the Midlands has supplied three of the hopes of England among the rising generation of amateurs, is itself a sufficient proof that there is some very good golf round Birmingham, in spite of its chimneys.

Probably the three finest courses round Birmingham are those at Sandwell Park, Handsworth, and Olton—park courses all. The first-named is at West Bromwich, and is enthusiastically described by one of its admirers as possessing "many natural hazards, such as rifle butts and pits." I am afraid these are natural only in a Pickwickian sense, but they make very efficient hazards, especially the disused rifle butts, whose monstrous heights have to be carried at the short thirteenth. Handsworth is one of the severest of courses upon the man who cannot keep the line. A brook that wanders through the course adds considerably to the gaiety of several holes, and helps to relieve the monotony of a landscape

which is just rather flat to make very inspiriting golf. There is a brook at Olton also, which crosses no fewer than seven of the holes. Here also the wild driver is likely to find a time of tribulation awaiting him, and he cannot afford to be short either, for I believe that Olton is the longest course in the Midlands. In all three courses the turf of the putting-greens is exceptionally good and in first-class order. There is nothing wrong with Birmingham, in spite of the hundred miles or thereby that lies between it and the nearest seaside links.

The two great centres of inland golf in Scotland are in a very different position from that of the great English cities. An hour's journey and an eighteenpenny fare from either Glasgow or Edinburgh will take the golfer on to some of the finest seaside links in the world. The Glasgow Club itself has two courses—an inland one at Killermont and a seaside one at Gailes on the Ayrshire coast. And it could hardly be expected that in these circumstances the same effort would be made or the same expenditure undertaken in the laying out of the inland courses as has been done in London.

I do not think that any of the Scottish inland greens can be put on a level with Sunningdale or Walton Heath. But that is not to say that they are not very good indeed. The course of the Edinburgh Burgess Golfing Society at Barn-ton, for instance, is a splendid example of park

golf, with its fine old turf, undulating greens and glorious trees. Its picturesqueness is considerably increased by the costumes of the players, for you must know that the Edinburgh Burgess claims to be the oldest golf club in Scotland, and in keeping with their ancient dignity they are at pains to preserve the time-honoured traditions of the game, among them that which prescribes a red coat and a black velvet cap as the proper attire of the golfer on the links. There is nothing old-fashioned, however, about the manner of the holes, unless it be the two tombstones, outposts of the churchyard of Cramond, which afford a gruesome sort of shelter to a badly-pulled ball at the thirteenth. No one would call Barnton a heroic course, but every hole in the round requires playing and playing well if the score-card is not to bear evidence of our fall from grace.

It is quite out of my power even to name all the courses famous in history and song around the Scottish capital, but I feel bound to make some mention of the courses at the Braids, which more people play over each year than play over any other course in the world, and where the pampered artisan can obtain inland golf of the very highest order at the modest charge of threepence per round, and avails himself of the opportunity to the tune of one hundred thousand rounds per year. Edinburgh is, of course, the great home of municipal golf, but

it is only when one hears that the number of rounds played during 1912 on the municipal courses at the Braids, Saughton and Portobello, was nearly two hundred and twenty thousand that one realizes the vast possibilities that there are for golf in this direction. But then it is not everywhere that even the most enterprising of corporations can offer golf at the rate of a penny per round of nine holes.

The premier club of the West of Scotland in point of age is the Glasgow Club, which was founded in 1787. As I have mentioned, it has two courses, a city one and a seaside one—a splendid arrangement, which I believe is to be found in only one other club in the whole world of golf, and that is the Royal Hong-Kong Club in China. The Glasgow Club has shifted its city head-quarters more than once, leaving a trail of municipal courses behind it to mark its progress. In their present home on the old estate of Killermont, whose mansion-house is now its club-house, the Glasgow players have a beautiful and interesting course. It is perhaps just a little on the short side for these long-driving days, but the holes are splendidly planned and full of feature, and the serried ranks of trees standing guard over the splendid turf, are at once a delight to the eye and a trial to the nerves of the man whose straightness is not his strong point.

It is my regret that I am by no means so well acquainted with the inland courses north of the

Tweed as I am with those on this side of it, but from those which I have seen I should judge that many of the moorland courses of Scotland belong to a very high order of inland golf. The course of the Ranfurly Castle Club at Bridge of Weir, for example, struck me when I played over it as being exceedingly good.

One other great city where golf is coming greatly into favour must not be omitted. That is the French capital, within easy distance of which there are no less than five excellent courses. And the Parisians are every bit as keen on the game as we are on this side of the Channel. At La Boulie alone six professionals are kept constantly employed during the summer, giving lessons to enthusiastic beginners. With La Boulie, which is generally regarded as the best of the Paris courses, the French Open Championship has made most of the British professionals fairly familiar, and we have generally found the French professors, led on by MM. Arnaud Massy, Jean Gassiat, and Louis Tellier, well able to hold their own with us on their native heath. The course itself is long and very fair, but the prevailing winds are calms—to use an Irishism—and some of the holes are hardly a severe enough test for an Open Championship. All the same, the courses of La Boulie, Chantilly and Fontainebleau are of a high class, and afford a striking proof of the way in which the royal and ancient game is going forth to conquer the world.

CHAPTER XX

THE GRASS BUNKER

THE player who takes no interest in the course whereon he plays is unworthy of the name of golfer ; but I prefer to believe that although his own game may be his first consideration, yet the appearance and welfare of his course is a thing that is often in his mind. And the two things have more connection with one another than is always understood ; many a poor display has been brought about by the uninteresting nature of the links over which it is played. On the other hand, when we play over a course such as Sunningdale, be our game never so bad, the course itself lightens our load of misery. To take a nine at the seventeenth hole at Ganton does not upset us half so much as would a nine at a hole devoid of any hazards save a dirty ditch, one hedge, and a couple of trees.

To improve the appearance of inland courses, therefore, should be the aim of all good green committees, for it not only helps to attract new members to the course, but adds greatly to the interest of the play. In the past ten years the art of course construction, in which we must

naturally include hazards, has improved beyond all conception. What was good enough for our fathers is not the least use to our modern architects. But it is as well, when making comparisons, not to lose sight of the fact that when the ancient cross-bank of earth was deemed sufficient, clubs were not overburdened with wealth, and it is due, in great measure, to the increased popularity of golf that the sinews of war have been forthcoming for modern improvements.

It is not my intention to divulge what I have been told regarding the sums spent on some of our leading inland courses; this does not come within the scope of this chapter, which is to deal with modern inland hazards, a much more fascinating subject. Those ancient cross-hazards that viewed from a balloon must have given our inland courses the appearance of a perforated music roll, are now well-nigh extinct. With the passing of years—or was it the advent of the rubber core?—our ideas have undergone a great change, and we now look back upon the straight earthen rampart only to wonder how we tolerated it so long.

Unfortunately, at the same time as these were demolished we also saw the abandonment of cross-hazards generally. A new school arose, which graciously permitted the habitual topper to pursue his way unchecked by hazards from tee to green. The wanderer from the straight path was punished severely, the slicer, for some

unaccountable reason, most of all ; but on most courses, provided the player kept straight, it became immaterial whether he obtained a good shot or not, he still went unpunished ; and the approach to the green was usually *between*, and not *over*, the bunkers. It is for this reason that good mashie players are seldom met with, for the mashie approach—one of the most interesting strokes in the game—was superseded by the run-up, a very poor substitute. Naturally, the player who topped from the tee suffered by his loss of distance ; but he was still much better off than the player who, with a drive of 200 yards, pulls ever so slightly and found himself under some frowning crag. We cannot do away with the luck in any game, but there is an absence of equity about this particular point that does not appeal at all to the man who has pulled.

My firm belief is that in leaving the straight path destitute of some type of cross-hazard we are contributing to the lowering of the standard of play. We are bound to admit that the ball of the present day has made the game easier ; a half-hit drive in the gutta days was practically a missed stroke, so far as distance was concerned ; but now we find that when we half-hit a drive the ball not only gets up, but loses very little in distance. And it treats a lowly hazard with disdain. The pot bunker, in order to be effective, should be twenty yards wide and two deep,

otherwise the ball takes it in its stride. I believe golf with the gutta to have been a far better game, calling for greater skill on the part of the player, than it is to-day, with balls that seem to improve in driving power with the advent of each season. The gutta player had to rely on himself alone, for the ball did not assist him in the least ; and many a player of the present day, whose handicap is six, would be a poor twelve if the gutta ever came back. My reason for touching on the ball side of the question is to draw attention to the fact that as the ball improves we should also arrange the hazards in keeping with the improvement. I do not mean we should have a surfeit of hazards, but rather increase the stopping power of those already in existence. I would make them so that a ball meeting them would have no possible chance of running through or bouncing clear ; and to encourage greater skill on the part of the player, or, in other words, to assist in raising the standard of the game, I would bring back the cross-hazard that used to bar our approaches to the green. This, of course, only where the length of the hole is suitable, for in a hole of 420 yards it would be obviously unfair for a hazard to be just short of the green. The man who can hit must be allowed to reach the green with his second without being asked to carry the whole distance of the stroke, otherwise his advantage over shorter players would be sadly to seek.

It may be asked in what manner more difficult hazards can raise the standard of play. My idea is that if they were more difficult a player would not treat them so cavalierly as he does. At present he is too apt to rely on the bouncing powers of his ball and less on himself; and does not this, in the course of time, affect the standard of his play—of everybody's play? I think that it does.

Now let us see how far our present-day architects have progressed in the art of constructing hazards. As a general rule we do not find sand-pits inland. A few courses are fortunate in this respect, my own for instance, where sand is found in great quantities. This is a very important advantage for any inland club, for the presence of sand renders the task of constructing hazards a pleasure, to say nothing of the saving of expense. But in the general run of courses we have to contend with heavy clay soil, and on these the work of bunker-making is anything but a pleasure. Even with crude material, however, our inland courses can be made more interesting. In place of the old rampart bunker, which probably dates from the landing of the Romans, we have now the grassy mounds known in some places as "broken ground." The greenkeeper, as he proceeds with their formation, turns his gaze frequently to a distant range of hills and endeavours to conform to the example set by Nature. There should be

no abrupt lines to these hillocks ; they should fit in with their surroundings. If they are made on an extensive scale—and otherwise they are almost useless—there should be scores of places wherein the ball could be trapped. A deposit of earth turfed over is an eyesore, but when this deposit is formed into hollows and plateaux, the player who is trapped in it will find himself called upon to play many interesting strokes. In the neighbourhood of a green this type of hazard is excellent : it removes the nakedness, and gives one a guide as to distance. The great drawback to our inland hazards in the past has been that after heavy rain the bunkers were full of water, but there is no possibility of the grass mounds ever becoming unplayable. When these hazards are made round a green they should be set as close to it as almost to merge into the green itself.

The most common of inland hazards is long grass, and no one would be sorry to see it done away with altogether, and these grassy hills erected instead. It is customary, when speaking of what can be done by means of this type of hazard on inland courses, to cite Mid-Surrey as an excellent case in point. Fifteen years ago it was a distinctly tame, uninteresting course. The earthbanks were numerous, the greens were naked, and the members unashamed. But all this has been swept away. We now have hills among which a couple of regiments could take

part in a sham fight without so much as being able to discern each other's presence. The player who pulls or slices from the tee now plays his second with a muttered prayer, although it is almost a pleasure to find oneself amongst the hills, for we are always certain of an interesting stroke. In short, the new kind of hazard has converted a tame course into a most difficult and exacting one.

So much, then, for the new system of bunkering. It will be some years before anything better is evolved. After all, we are only trying to reproduce inland the seaside features; but the artificial hazard has at least the one advantage of often being more scientifically planned than those that Nature has made. The one thing to look to is that we do not err on the side of leniency, for, as I have pointed out, increased driving power should be met with increased difficulties.

In our combat with the modern ball we have altered the formation of our greens: in place of the dead, flat surface, we have now hogbacks and hollows. Personally, I prefer the green where "borrow" is necessary, but on some greens that I have played upon, this feature has been so exaggerated as to make one wonder what was in the mind of their constructor. In the old days to be on the green meant that you should hole out in two, but on some of the very modern we often find ourselves called upon to play away

from the hole in order to get near it. On the occasion of the 1912 championship at Muirfield, at the fifteenth green the hole was in such a place that it was well-nigh impossible for the player who was on the near side of the green and to the left to place his next dead. Of course it by no means follows that one *must* get down in two on a green, but I merely draw attention to the change that has taken place. The fairway improves every year, despite inland soil, for the art of green-keeping has also made vast strides, and, if we permit our imagination to run riot, we shall live to see the day when on our inland courses the ball will sit up every time, and a depressed lie be quite unknown. And if, even on the windiest day, we can never feel the sand blowing in our faces nor the sting of the spray on our cheeks, at least we have always a tree to shelter under when the heavens open. There are a number of compensations, even in Inland Golf.

CHAPTER XXI

MERELY REMINISCENCE

I OFFER no apology for this chapter, because there is nothing that my mind dwells upon with greater pleasure than the varied experiences I have had of the greatest of games, in which I found endless interest and enjoyment as a caddie at Jersey, even as I have since done as Open Champion. I was born in the year 1877, when golf was not quite the universal game that it has since become. At Grouville, however, there was a course almost within our gates, and in common with the other boys of the village, I swung a golf club, or what did duty for one, almost as soon as I could walk. I have heard of golf clubs being made from crude materials, but surely no golfer ever started his career with a queerer weapon than myself. Vardon, I believe, speaks of cutting a stick out of the hedge for his first shaft, and I have seen a lad on Mitcham Common playing with what appeared to be the spout of a kettle. But my first club was made for me by my father out of materials stranger still. I can see it in my mind even now, and remember the pride with which I rushed to display it to the others.

The head was a wooden pin of the kind that is used by the Jersey fishermen for mending nets. Into this my father bored a hole by means of a red-hot poker, and into the hole he fitted a thorn stick. I am by no means sure that this early effort in the club-making line was not the first attempt ever made at the socket type of club.

In my eyes this club was a thing of beauty and a joy for ever, and it served me until I was old enough to fashion one for myself. The clubs I made at that time, however, would scarcely take a diploma in a club-making contest, for I obtained my material from the nearest lane. There I would get a lump of wood and shape it into a head with my pocket-knife, the lead and horn being conspicuous by their absence. As the wood was green, its weight was sufficient. There was no need to worry about where the shafts were to come from, for did not the hedges contain plenty of good straight sticks, ash being most favoured.

With clubs of this sort I played for many years, and thought no end of them; but at last arrived the day when a gentleman for whom I had been carrying presented me with a real one. Picture the rapture of a village lad used to playing with a hedge-stick, and presented with a proper golf-club for the first time in his life. I ask you to believe that that club went to bed with me every night. Only those who have been caddies can appreciate the importance of the first club. I

was the envied one of the users of hedge-sticks, and no doubt strutted on the links with conscious pride, spoke with scorn of that which I once had valued, and generally endeavoured to create as much envy in the breasts of my fellows as the occasion seemed to justify.

As I grew up I had other clubs given to me, and it was this, I think, which gave me my real start as a golfer. I believe that I laid the foundations of my game in those days by never playing with the same club too long. I would take one out and play with it alone for, say a couple of days, and then I would leave it at home and use another; and I am sure that I thus learnt more about the way each club should be used than I have since I became a full-blown professional. Another habit of ours, which I consider gave us excellent training, was that a few of us used to get together and play for hours at a stretch with one particular kind of club. Say that we all took out our mashies, we would practise for a whole forenoon, seeing who could get nearest to the hole. And the penny that hung on the result was of momentous importance, the penny not being so plentiful in those days. Next time we would change the club, and perhaps use the iron; but the result was that we all had a good schooling with every club in turn.

Another thing which helped us was that, while carrying for players we would naturally pick out the one whom we believed to possess the best

style, and him we would imitate. We saw enough golf to make us very sound judges, and as our young muscles were adaptable enough to enable us to imitate any style we pleased, it can easily be understood that by the time they were fairly set we could swing a golf club in the way that it should be swung. Of that little band of caddies, the Gaudins, the Becks, and Tom Renouf have since then made themselves famous in the ranks of the professionals, and given the golfing world living proof of the advantages of commencing the game in one's youth.

I continued as a caddie for some time—until I secured a post as professional to a little club, just outside St. Malo, but I did not stay there long. I became homesick, partly owing to the fact that I was not able to speak French well, and I therefore returned to Jersey, and worked upon the course there for a few months. During this time I was asked to go over to Guernsey for the summer, which I did, returning to Jersey after the season was over.

By this time I figured at something like plus one on the handicap list of our local artisan club, and I suppose I gave promise of becoming a decent player, for I was sent by the Royal Jersey Club to play in a tournament confined to professionals of Hampshire and the Channel Islands, which was to be played at Winchester. This was my first visit to England and my first real tournament, and greatly to my joy I succeeded in getting into the

leading place. It was while I was still at Jersey that I made my first appearance in the Open Championship of 1899, at Sandwich. This was the first tournament of importance in which I had ever taken part, and I was up against players whom I had often read of but had never seen. True, the Vardons were fellow islanders, but Taylor, Herd and Braid were then but mere names to me. It gave me a fine opportunity of seeing how championships should be played, however, for I was partnered with Harry Vardon, who that year won the championship by five clear strokes from Jack White. I had no reason to be displeased with my own first attempt, for at the close I tied with Alec Herd for sixteenth place, a much higher position than I had dared to hope for. This experience did my game a power of good: it showed me—what young professionals are apt not to realise till they try it for themselves—that something more than mere skill is required to win an Open. It is all very well to play an exhibition match or to take part in a tournament, but the strain of a long-drawn-out championship is a very different thing, and the man who wins it has got to work hard for his success. It was shortly after this first championship that I was appointed professional to the Churston Club, South Devon, and there I remained for three years and a half, during which my game steadily improved. I was rounding off the rough edges, as it were, and gradually gaining experience.

I met with several minor successes during this period, and then I succeeded Vardon as professional to the Ganton Club. The reader will easily guess that it was no small matter to follow in the footsteps of such a man as Vardon. I can only compare my feelings to those of a small turn on the music-hall stage who has to come on after a star. He makes his entrance when the audience is still yelling encores to his predecessor, and he may be forgiven for feeling that his turn stands a good chance of falling flat. This was exactly my situation when I first went to Ganton, and my only consolation was that the members of that club would not expect too much. What perhaps did more than anything else to reassure me was the success which I gained during my first autumn up in the North, in the competition for the Leeds Cup. In the previous year Vardon had won it, and, like the true sportsman that he is, he came up specially from Totteridge to Redcar, where the competition was played that year, to defend his title. As it happened, however, I was at the top of my form, broke the record of Redcar with a round of seventy, and so kept the Leeds Cup still at Ganton.

Ganton is a course that is calculated to bring out the best golf that is in any player, and during the nine years of my stay there I knew that it did a lot for me. During my stay at Churston I had never lost sight of those designs upon the Open Championship title which my first experience had

inspired. In 1900 I finished thirteenth with a score of 334 ; in 1901, twelfth with 332 ; and in 1902, ninth with 318. My first year at Ganton, however, saw me fall back to twenty-fourth place with 323. I was far from well during that meeting, and every stroke of my first round of ninety was made at the cost of considerable pain ; but I can scarcely plead that as an excuse when Vardon himself was playing in wretched health—and won. I made amends, however, by getting into the final of the *News of the World* tournament, which was instituted that year, losing to James Braid by four and three.

During the eight years that followed I was conscious that I was steadily drawing nearer to the longed for goal. In 1904 I finished twelfth with a total of 315 ; in 1905, eleventh with 330 ; in 1906, eighth with 312 ; in 1907, fifth with 318 ; in 1908, third with 301 ; in 1909, sixth with 304 ; in 1910, fifth with 308 ; and in 1911, fifth with 305. The last of these really brought me nearer the first place than I had ever been before, for so close was the finish that only two strokes separated Vardon and Massy, who tied for first place, from Braid, Taylor and myself who tied for fifth.

During these years I won many tournaments. A good number of these were in connection with the Northern Section of the Professional Golfers Association, a section wherein I spent many happy days, but in many ways the most remarkable of

all was the contest for the Leeds Cup in 1911. The story has been told before, but it is so appropriate to this chapter that I may be forgiven for recalling it. At the time I was the holder of that trophy, and shortly before the competition took place I sent it to the silversmiths to have my name engraved upon it as the winner of the previous year, together with the date. The engraver must either have misunderstood his orders, or felt himself suddenly gifted with the spirit of prophecy, for when that wretched trophy arrived at Leeds on the morning of the event—the tournament took place on the Leeds course—to my great astonishment, but still greater disgust, I found that the inscription had had added unto it the legend : E. Ray, 1910 ; *E. Ray*, 1911, thus anticipating my success in the tournament which was about to be played. I can still remember Harry Fulford's look of reproach as he examined the Cup, and I naturally had a very painful time of it. However, there was nothing for it but to do my best to make the prophecy good, and to my great relief, the engraver proved himself a true prophet, and I won it all right, though Tom Renouf was only a stroke behind. But it is not given to every player to experience what I felt as I left that first tee.

I had some interesting experiences also in the Yorkshire Professional Foursomes Tournaments, instituted four years before my departure for the south. In this tournament players draw for their

partners, and the curious thing was that I managed to be one of the winning couple on all four occasions, although with a new partner every year except the fourth. The first of them all I shall never forget for it was played in a blizzard of snow. One match came to the last tee with one side dormy one, and then at the last hole the result was decided in the most unexpected fashion by both sides losing their ball in the blizzard. In the semi-final A. Beck and Cassidy at one green failed to find a ball that they could have sworn had pitched no more than a foot from the hole. At the next tee it was discovered firmly lodged in a mass of frozen snow which was clinging to the heel of the caddie who had gone to take out the pin!

In my own memory certain games naturally stand out specially. I think that the best round of golf I ever played was when I did Ganton in 64, and Ganton, be it said, is no duffer's course, for it is no course for the erratic player. I had several scores in the sixties, but 64 was my best. I have had many hard games and tight finishes, notably that with Braid in the final of the *News of the World* Tournament at Walton Heath in 1911, and against Vardon in the final of the following year at Sunningdale. Although I was not the winner on either occasion, I gave my opponents a good run for their money, and lost each time by a single hole. The finish of my match with Braid was particularly exciting for I was

six down at the turn in the second round. But I put my back into it and came home in 34, winning five holes out of the nine and halving the rest, so that Braid only won by the least possible margin after all. Curiously enough I had another great struggle with Braid earlier in the same year, in the final of the tournament at Cruden Bay. I was dormy two, but Braid squared at the last, holing a twelve yard putt to do it. We played off over nine holes, and this time it was my turn to hole a long one to square the match on the last green. Then we started to play off hole by hole, but Braid pulled his second out of bounds, and so gave me what I consider the hardest match of my life.

The most remarkable golf I have had against me was Taylor's in the replayed tie for the German Championship at Baden-Baden. Jack White summed the situation up perfectly when he remarked that only a little tin god could have stood up against J. H. that day. To start with four threes and find oneself two strokes to the bad is pretty rough, and for the second time in one year I lost a Championship in the play-off, Duncan defeating me in the Belgian Championship earlier in the season.

Early in 1912, I left Ganton for my present course at Oxhey, forsaking the north for the south as many well-known players had done before me, for out of the Northern Section came such men as Harry Vardon, Alec Herd, George Duncan,

Fred Robson and Tom Ball, which almost leads one to the belief that the north lays the foundations of a game to which the south puts the finishing touches. It proved so in my case, for on my first appearance in the Open Championship as a south country professional, I managed to win. The event is too recent for me to devote much space to it, but I might say that after the first two rounds I felt that my chance had come at last. My victory in the Cramond Brig tournament a few days previously had put me on good terms with myself, but even with such an apparently little lead as I had, I never felt that I should be headed off. In the last round, it is true, I began to have an uneasy fear that Vardon might catch me on the post, and I think that his attempt to do it in that last round was one of the best things that even he has done. Let me just say here that I think Harry Vardon is undoubtedly the finest golfer I have ever seen. No one has a higher opinion of the powers of the other great champions than I, but I think that Vardon has more strokes in his bag than any of us.

With that I bring this chapter and my book to a close, though I hope that time may still have many other interesting matches and meetings to add to the store of my golfing memories. Naturally I love the game, and rejoice to believe that it is the one sport that is truly fitted for all

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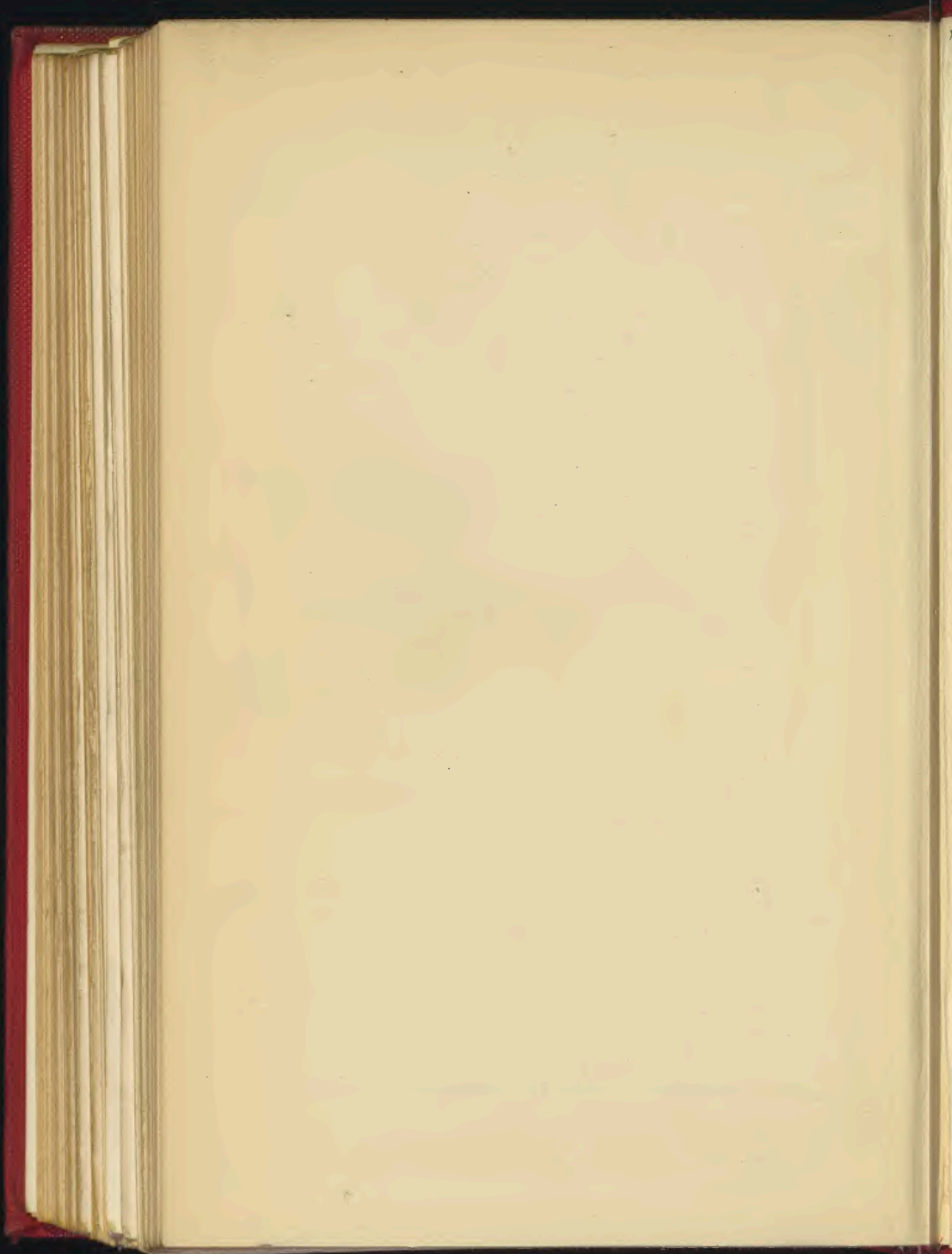
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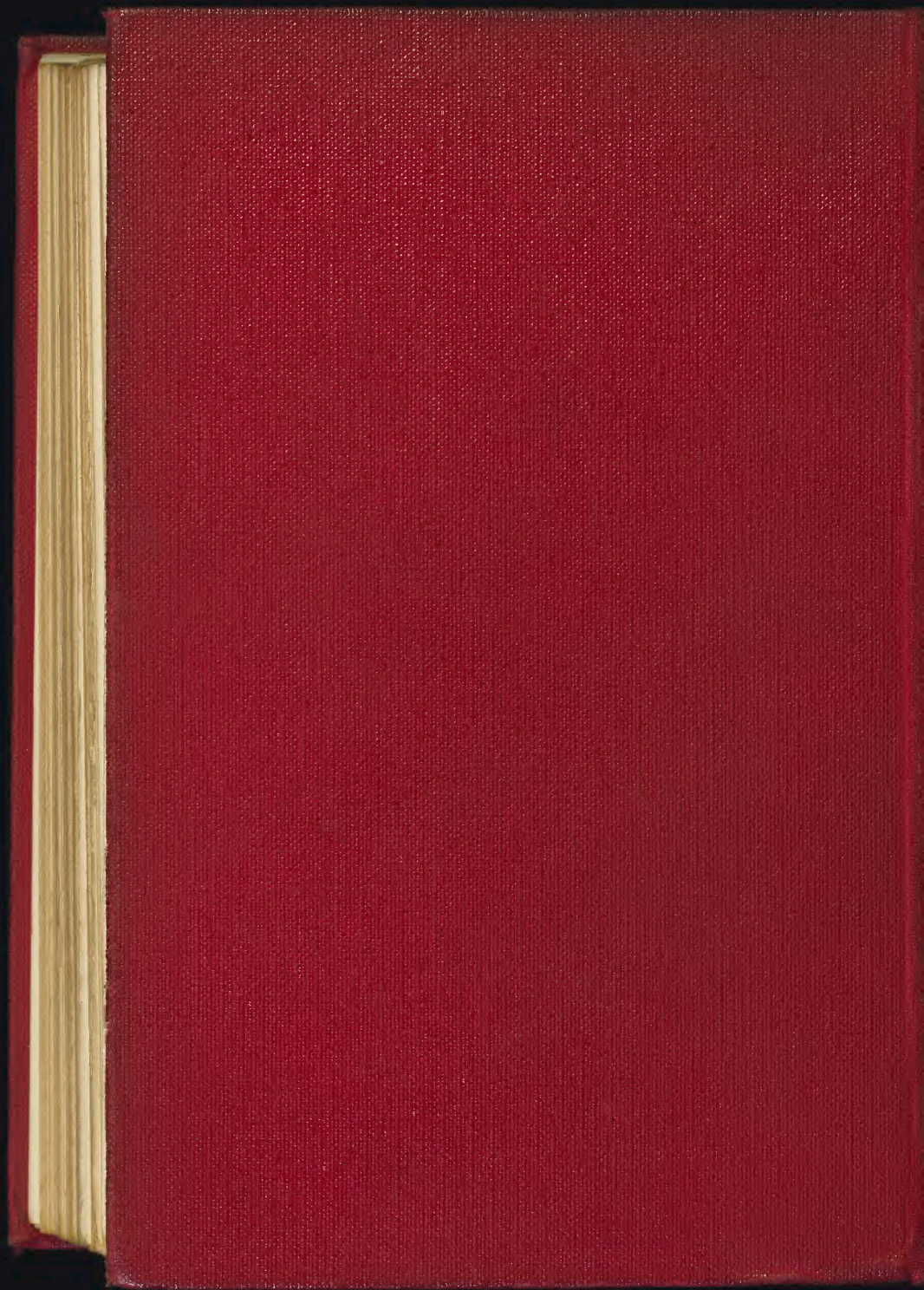
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