



LONDON, APRIL 8, 1909.

I have just received from the honorary secretary of the Honorable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, the club of Muirfield, the rules and regulations which are to govern this year's amateur championship, which is to take place on that course next month. Generally these rules are the same as formerly, and the only new provision is that arranged by the controlling authorities at their last meeting, that no player may now enter unless he has been scratch or better at the club which he enters since the beginning of the year, and also that his entry must have the definitely-expressed approval of such club. This provision will eliminate the absolute duffer element which has been rather a nuisance at the championship meetings in recent years. It is announced that entries will close on May 17, and the draw will take place on the following day. Entries must be made to the Hon. Secretary of the Honorable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, Mr. Hugh Patten, The Club-house, Gullane, N. B., and it is to be noted that they must be made through the club from which the competitor enters, and not direct. I have a recollection of one intending American competitor overlooking this provision one year and spending much money in cabling the day before the entries closed.

In connection with this amateur championship there is a point of some significance to mention. The last time the amateur championship was played at Muirfield it was won by Mr. Robert Maxwell, who is on his home green when he is there. Last year Mr. Maxwell did not compete, and there was talk to the effect that in these days he does not care so much for golf as he used to do. But for weeks past everybody has been saying that he has been practising hard, and that he is right back on to his very best game. Upon the top of this there is the fact that last Saturday the Honorable Company held one of the only two meetings it holds in the year, the spring meeting, and that the chief medal at it was won by Mr. Maxwell himself. One who was there says he never wishes to see finer play with wooden clubs than Mr. Maxwell displayed on that occasion, but that his short putting was weak. A certain allowance must be made from this judgment for the fact that "oor Bobbie"—as he is called in the vernacular—is immensely popular in Scotland, and that the Scots conceive that he is their chief hope. However, at the present moment it is certain that he and Mr. Hilton are better favorites than any others. Mr. Travers, whose coming is eagerly anticipated, is, of course, an unknown quantity so far as this side is

concerned, but the general disposition is to rank his prospects high, and I know of a case where a substantial bet was made last week in which Hilton, Maxwell and he were taken on level terms against six others, a man on one side to win to make the bet operative.

The boom in golf that is going on here at the present time is simply enormous. During the past week no fewer than nine new courses have been announced. I am writing now just on the eve of the Easter holidays, when a fine spell of weather has come along after a very trying winter, and there are the most complete indications of such a busy time in golf during the next few days as the country has never known. In this connection it is interesting to note that some statistics have just been published concerning the amounts paid by visitors to different clubs, mainly at the seaside, in green fees during the course of the year. The system here is that visitors pay so much a day when properly introduced, the amount generally being half a crown. In a few cases it is five shillings. It is stated that one club alone took £60 in green fees in three days last summer, and that in another case £600 was taken during the month of August. At Newquay

in Cornwall the visitors paid the sum of £1,264 during the season, and at Sherinham in Norfolk they paid £1,250. These are very impressive figures. It has been calculated that there will be at least 75,000 golfers playing regularly during the forthcoming holiday time, and that in these three or four days they will spend about £45,000 in the pursuit of their game. Golfers are getting more and more into the way of doing their golf on the lavish scale here. You often encounter men who travel at the cheapest class when they are going to their business, but who are veritable spendthrifts when their chief pastime is taken in hand.

An interesting item of news is that Mr. Edward Blackwell, according to a letter that has just reached me, is to be married on the twenty-eighth of this month. This is the player whom Mr. Travis beat in the final of the Amateur Championship. "Ted," as he is generally called, is one of the most popular golfers of the day, and it is quite a saying that "when Ted goes out to play all St. Andrews goes out to watch him." He is one of the foremost representatives of the St. Andrews' school. He is good enough to win the championship any time, but I am rather afraid he will not have his honeymooning done in time to be at Muirfield.