



THE HISTORY OF COLONEL BOGEY

BY "THE COLONEL"

THE REAL "BOGEY" or "the colonel," as the imaginary opponent with the fixed score for each hole is sometimes called, came into being about the end of 1890 and the beginning of the following year.

It is generally accepted that a Coventry gentleman was the first to come by the germ of the idea. In December, 1890, the scratch score of the Coventry course was taken, being the score that a good scratch player would take to each hole of the round, making no mistakes but also fluking nothing nor being fortunate with any special flashes of brilliant play.

At the time they called this "the ground score," and about six months afterward, when the members of the club had become properly accustomed to the idea, Mr. Rotherham offered a prize for competition according to the system, while later in the same year the club gave a challenge cup for com-

petition on the same lines. Thus the system was established, but not the name which is now universal.

The name, however, followed very soon, and its origin was curious. A few members of the Coventry club paid a visit to Great Yarmouth, where the new kind of competition was explained to Dr. Thomas Browne, R. N., who was honorary secretary of the Yarmouth Golf Club. Dr. Browne liked the idea exceedingly, and took it upon himself to write to various prominent golfers asking them their views as to the advisability or otherwise of introducing this ground score system into the general routine of competition golf. For the most part the answers made were favorable.

Then one day Dr. Browne went out to play against a friend, Major Charles A. Wellman, and they agreed instead of playing directly against each other, to play each against the

ground score and decide their match according as each fared in this way. It so happened that about that time the bogey man song was being sung by the late E. J. Lonnen at the Gaiety Theatre and everybody else came to sing it, too. The words of the refrain that gave a creepy feeling to the children of the day were:

Hush! Hush! Hush!

Here comes the bogey man!

So hide your head beneath the clothes,

He'll catch you if he can!

There was the idea of bogey in golf "He'll catch you if he can!" And it flashed across the mind of Major Wellman when he was playing this game and was getting "caught" by the ground score. "Why," said he to his friend Browne, "this player of yours is a regular bogey man!" A considerable piece of golfing history was made in that chance remark, for bogey was from that moment established for golf. "Capital," said Dr. Browne, "we'll call it that!" and he had the name adopted by the Yarmouth Club.

Some time afterward he went on a golfing trip to the south coast and set forth to play one day on the course of the United Service Club at Alverstoke in Hampshire. On his arrival there he informed his hosts that he had brought with him a friend who was a very modest, quiet fellow and

a steady golfer, playing a uniformly good but never a brilliant game. He begged that he might be permitted to introduce him to the club as an honorary member, and accordingly, going on with this little pleasantry, he "presented" him in the way of an explanation of the bogey man game to the late Captain Seely Vidal, R. E., who was honorary secretary of the club, and to Dr. Walter Reid, R. N.

"Excellent," they exclaimed, and they agreed that they would certainly have the bogey man as a golfer among them, and there and then they worked out a score for him for that course and went out to play against him.

"Stay!" said Captain Vidal at the moment of starting. "Gentlemen, we must proceed in a proper service way. Every member of this club has a proper service rank. Our new invisible member, who never makes a mistake, ought surely to be a commanding officer. He must be a colonel!" And then saluting the phantom that he imagined, he added, "Colonel Bogey! We are delighted to find you on the links, sir! I could not well say 'see you.' "

And that was how Colonel Bogey came to golf, and a very great officer he is today, playing invisibly against thousands of golfers every Saturday and on many other days besides.