



LONDON, April, 1918.

THERE ARE CRANKS in every country, and sympathetic attention has been paid in this part of the troubled world to reports that have reached us upon zealots in America who, at the first blast of the national war trumpet, were loud in their advocacy of the tearing up of some of the golf courses, including certain of the public kind, to the end that they might be used for the growing of food materials. Nobody in any country would be so stupid as to suggest that considerations of games in any way whatever come before considerations of food. If there is no food, then there will be no people, and games will not be wanted. That is the simplest and most final logic. But then we have all become aware with time that these first enthusiasms in new causes, wild and ebullient as they are, are often sadly misdirected and wrong, and that sometimes more harm is done by them than good. The time may come when all golf courses may have to be surrendered for such a purpose as that indicated, and, if it should do so, then we may be sure, the golf community everywhere being what it is, that they will be willingly and cheerfully surrendered. But it is quite evident that in some cases the propositions that courses should be given up forthwith for this purpose are made and pressed by people who are in more than one respect not sportsmen, and who have previously

evinced a considerable prejudice against games of every kind, while golf, owing to its popularity and the manifest enjoyment that is derived from it by many thousands of people, particularly excites their antagonism. They are the miserable kill-joys, and in this war excuse, so difficult as it is in such circumstances to make reply at times, they feel that they have the best opportunity of their pessimist careers. Therefore a certain amount of this advocacy must be discounted.

Then it has been found after examination and consideration that the view of enthusiasts and officials that golf ground is ideal for the production of cereals and vegetables is often wrong. It is commonly the case that the better the ground is for golf the poorer it is for food growing. What the courses have been selected for, or otherwise trained to grow, is the finest, thinnest grass, and they have often been doctored and treated with all kinds of chemicals to induce them to produce just that kind of turf. Something else, and that in no small measure, may be needed to make them ideal for food production now. Then again, in view of the way they have been cut about and bunkered, a considerable amount of labour is needed to make them fit for the plough, while all the time, at present, there are other lands in abundance near-by and everywhere that are more or less waste, and which by every

rule of common sense and fairness should be taken first. The golf courses, however, allure the cranks, and they reject with lofty scorn the proposition that in most cases large sums of money have been spent upon them for their development, and that there should be compensation in such cases (which would incidentally make this most expensive food-growing land!) while also the surrounding property, which often depends for three-fourths of its value on the proximity of the golf course, would inevitably depreciate in value immediately. These are arguments which were pressed, and successfully, in England at the beginning of the food-growing campaign when we had to deal with these cranks in abundance; and the matter is mentioned now as it is evident that many of the circumstances are the same here and in America, though your continent has such an enormously greater extent of undeveloped land which in emergency will be available for the prime necessity.

The matter has, of course, developed considerably in this country since the food question first arose, and so it may do in America. At the outset it was agreed that there was no necessity for golf courses anywhere to be torn asunder, and it is still the case that most frequently they would be unsuitable for the purposes they would be required for, while it is recognised on the one hand that it would be unfair to demolish them without paying compensation, and on the other that they are serving a very useful war-time purpose in many cases by affording fresh air and exercise to overworked individuals very much in need of them. Still waste ground attached to courses has been in many cases of late applied to food production, and in some of the country districts whole courses have

been surrendered. These have, however, been very few, but the golf clubs everywhere exhibit a disposition to make all possible sacrifices when it is shown that such are needed and that other land around about is not available. Some time ago it was officially stated that a large part of the six thousand acres controlled by the seventy golf clubs in Surrey is now used for crops and grazing. Later it was announced that the Middlesex golf clubs, of which there are twenty-five, occupying among them about two thousand acres, appointed a committee with Mr. Little, Lord Jersey's agent, to inspect the land with a view to food production. It was then announced that some land which might be suitable for allotments or grazing would be offered to farmers to enable them to plough neighbouring land, but it was stated that the ploughing of part of a golf course and grazing the remainder often meant new fencing, material for which is not available. It is announced that thirteen acres of the course at Otley in the West Riding of Yorkshire have been ploughed for corn growing, and the grass land has been dressed with artificials and pastured by cattle, the greens only being fenced off; more than half of the course at Newport, (Monmouth) is being put under cultivation. Pyecombe golf course in Sussex has been ploughed, twelve acres of the Ealing golf course near London have been given up to cultivation, half the course at Dulwich, another suburban ground has been yielded in the same way, and there are reports of similar efforts on the part of golfers to meet the war exigencies at Acton, Romford (the first club in the south to which James Braid was attached), Beckenham, Hendon and other places. This list could be very considerably extended, but I merely

quote these few instances to show what is being done. The directors of the Felixstowe Golf Links lately protested to the East Suffolk War Committee against any further portion of the links being ploughed up, for the reason that the ground is already put to good agricultural use by growing hay and oats for grazing purposes. The protest was reasonable in view of the golf sacrifices that Felixstowe, once such a happy place for the game, has made. It was the first in the country to make a sacrifice, its old and famous course being entirely yielded up for war purposes. Another that has protested is Llandudno, the beautiful and favourite resort on the North Wales course. Here is the course of the North Wales club which has always been very popular, and it has been found that golf serves the interests of the town so well in bringing visitors there—and it lives on its visitors even in war-time—that the municipal authorities some time ago determined on the establishment of a public course. Half of this course, nine holes, was finished before the war began, and work on it was then suspended. Some time later, however, the authorities, feeling that it was more than ever necessary to induce the distant public to visit the place, and there being signs that golf would maintain its full popularity in these northern parts, it was determined to finish the course. Now the local Agricultural Committee, that settles the question as to what land shall be ploughed for food purposes, has claimed twenty acres of this new municipal course. The municipal authorities, as I have suggested, protested very strongly, on the facts as here presented, they had a good case, but the last I heard of the matter was that the Agricultural Committee was insistent and was getting its own way.

Some time ago I read somewhere in *The American Golfer* some interesting suggestions about the possibility of reducing the number of holes on courses and playing across from one to another so as to make up the full eighteen with a smaller space of land. This is certainly a good expedient when something of the kind becomes necessary; and it may interest the readers of this journal who paid attention to the remarks to which I have referred, that in two or three cases the idea has been applied in this country with conspicuous success. Of course these things are matters of expediency; they are not ideal arrangements; but there is that satisfaction in them of making the best of an unfortunate situation, and that is what everybody has to do in these straining times. I should not have dealt with the land troubles to the extent I have done in these notes were it not possible that much the same difficulties may have to be dealt with on the other side of the Atlantic. Conditions reproduce themselves in many far-separated places in this vast theatre of war.

THERE IS A THOUGHT in the following extract from a golf article that lies before me. The writer is referring to a letter sent to the newspapers on the golf and food question and signed "Five Handicap," the suggestion made by the signature being apparently that the writer was a good golfer and knew well what he was talking about, though indeed he might have been a good player and yet have had little knowledge of the subject, as appeared to be the case. The critic of the letter wrote: "As a matter of fact, the five handicap man is neither one thing nor another. He is certainly not a bad player, but at the same time he is not one of the best, and having stuck at

the five instead of getting down to the scratch of which he is in sight, but cannot reach, he is almost invariably a disappointed man. My experience of the five men is that they very often consist of persons who have developed the knack in these rubber-cored days of hitting a long ball through the exertion of strength and that is all they can do. A man who can hit very far and straight, as some men can learn to do in a few weeks, may become a five man very soon, but he may never become a golfer." American readers in considering this criticism will do well to remember that there is a difference of three or four strokes between the American handicaps and ours, and that it is something about the American eight that is referred to when the five man is here spoken of.

I AM ASKED to state, and have much pleasure in doing so, that the Mid-Surrey Golf Club, of Richmond, Surrey, of whose enterprise I have frequently had occasion to make mention in these notes, will be glad to welcome and give the hospitality of their course to all officers of the army and navy of the United States who are golfers and would like to avail themselves of this opportunity of enjoying the game while they may be in or round about London. It is an invitation that I am sure they will appreciate, particularly when they have had one day's experience of it and know what it is. In the first place the course, though somewhat flat and of the park order, is otherwise a very fine one, is long and well bunkered in the most scientific manner, and is as good a test of golf as need be wished for. It is more convenient of access from various parts of London than any other, and is only about twenty-five minutes' journey on the District Railway (Richmond sta-

tion) from the middle of the town, or about the same from Waterloo on the London and South Western Railway, while the course is about five minutes' walk from the Richmond station. Thus it is possible here, as at few other golfing places, to have half a day's golf and do a full half day's work, and as a matter of fact it is largely used for this purpose. Again a visitor who is alone need never hesitate on that account, as it is almost an unknown thing to go there and be unable not only to get a match, but one with a man of somewhat approximate handicap, for the reason that men are always looking in there casually and alone, in search of matches themselves, and the steward, Gibbon, has always got something ready to suit everybody. The American who goes along there will be sure of a pleasant game and of meeting people who are anxious to be friends with him and to add to his comfort and convenience while he is among them. All that such a visitor need do is to go and present himself to the secretary, Mr. James C. Montgomerie, and the matter will be at once adjusted to his complete satisfaction and a few minutes later he will find himself on the first tee with an agreeable opponent to play with. The club is normally one of the busiest in the country, and in war-time it is easily the busiest, the week-end attendances being such as generally to crowd the courses somewhat inconveniently. However this is rather in favour of the visitor wishing to make friends. Being situated alongside the famous Kew Gardens, the course is very charming in the spring and summer time, and is then at its best in every way. There are no better putting-greens in England. Most of the players in these days are officers in the army and navy, or men engaged in war

work in some form or other, and many Canadian officers have availed themselves of the privileges offered to their great satisfaction. J. H. Taylor, the many times Open Champion, is the professional here. The Committee say they hope to see many of our American allies playing there during the coming summer, and one has the greater pleasure in passing on the invitation for knowing what happiness it will really confer upon those who accept it. They should remember the directions I have given. This, let me tell those who are concerned, is a very useful paragraph.

ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS some notes have been made here concerning the war work that is being done by prominent women golfers who are well known to the large number of American women players who have been over here for the championships and other events. There can be few of our lady players better known to yours than Mrs. Willock-Pollen, who for a long period has been closely associated with the management of the game. Since the war began she has been indefatigable in her efforts. She is now responsible for the raising of voluntary shifts of workers for the Y. M. C. A. canteen at the munition works which have been established close to her home. Not only does she organise this business, but she works at the canteen herself for the greater part of four days a week, and is also a member of the billeting committee whose duty it is to find accommodation in the neighbourhood for the hosts of workers who must be housed in the locality. Her only son recently went out to France with the Coldstream Guards.

A LETTER that has been received here from Taylor, the professional to the East London Golf Club in South

Africa upon the question of the shortage of golf club woods, is interesting and important. Concerning the reported shortage of hickory and persimmon for shafts and heads of golf clubs, he says: "I feel certain that this vastly-wooded country can produce substitutes for these, especially persimmon. I have been experimenting with a few South African woods for shafts, but so far with no satisfactory result, yet one of these woods is all right for putter shafts, but it lacks the fibre of hickory, and is inclined to be soft and easily warped. I think if some of the manufacturers would get samples of wood from here, they would find a suitable one for both heads and shafts, as in this country there are great varieties of timber, some of which, if properly seasoned and cut would give new life to the manufacture of clubs. I hope that some of your readers, especially those in the manufacturing and turning branches, will give my suggestion a little thought, and so help golf and golfers the world over. I shall be pleased to give any assistance I can in connection with the woods, and find out exactly how to get at the source of supply. The Forestry Department of the Government, I think, is the proper quarter to make inquiries."

CAPTAIN A. G. BARRY, M. C., who won the Amateur Championship at Prestwick in the year after Mr. Travis's success at Sandwich, is now an instructor at Hythe.

AMONG THE COMMENTS that have appeared in the English journals concerning recent events in the golf politics of the United States, I take the following from the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, the leading publication giving attention to golf at the present time:

"Of the definitely constituted golfing authorities, it will be agreed that the United States Golf Association is the most important, holding direct and absolute control as it does over the game in its own country, being endowed with powers that are possessed by no other, and, by its spirit and determination, exercising a considerable influence upon the game not only in America, but in other countries, including even this of ours. Before the war there was some tendency for this Association and the powers of St. Andrews to work in concert, and when peace comes an even closer intimacy of understanding will be necessary for the well-being of the game in the period of reconstruction. This being so, it follows that the major transactions of this Association are a matter of some concern to us. The annual meeting has just been held at Philadelphia, and some important business was transacted. Mr. Howard Perrin, who has been at the head of affairs during a momentous period, when the Association had to decide on its war policy with all its difficulties, and who has guided it wonderfully well and with a strong hand and a mind that has a proper appreciation of the dignity of the game, found himself unable to continue in the presidency, and has been succeeded by Mr. Frederick Wheeler of New York, in whose care, as we know, the interests of American golf during a crisis in its history are very safe indeed. He has a strong executive committee to aid him, and they will be equal to dealing with the many difficult problems that beset them."

After commenting on the decision to play no more national championships until the war is over, this journal proceeds:

"On the other hand the Association is no kill-joy, and is not inclined to make really useless restrictions. In so far as it can be done without prejudicing national interests, it will devote itself to the fullest extent possible in maintaining the popularity and full vogue of the game, having the most influential support for the proposition that in time of war it is most essential that the health and spirits of the business community should be maintained at their best; and, as has been proved, this can be better done by games like golf—and better by golf than by any other game—than in any other way. Consequently, the executive committee have announced that they are in no way opposed to the holding of sectional, city, or club events, inasmuch as these require little arrangement and organisation, little time to play, and the men taking part in them can keep in touch with their affairs."

There is approving comment on the decision to reinstate Mr. Ouimet to amateurism, and it is remarked that the executive committee does not, of

course, go back on anything that it has done in the past.

WITH ITS SEASON, such as it is, still lingering on, it is good for a spell to turn one's thoughts away, as we did in the old days, from all the harshness round about us to the sunshine of the south of France. There indeed the sunlight and the warmth, the flowers and the bluest sea, are as of yore, but the pall of war hangs upon that lovely shore as here. And yet there is not there the wracking strain, the violent concussions of new war shocks and circumstances, bombs from the night skies, nor many of the other harassments with which the people of the more northern regions of France and those of England are afflicted. I am even informed by those who know and eat it that there is much food on the *cote d'azure*, and what does it matter then if it is dear to buy? Last year about this time I gave some reports that had reached me of the state of life and the game in that delightful place of winter and spring resort to which many of us English and Americans paid homage with unflinching regularity and increasing pleasure in the old days of peace. With a rare devotion and energy they had kept the old game going well, at most places, and at that time were full of hope that that would prove to be their last war winter, and that by this present season they would have done something, their best, to have restored the old pre-war conditions, and would have had the soldiers among them in golfing mufti again. Alas! for the hopes of war. This time in my letters from the corner of the Bay of Biscay where are Biarritz, St. Jean de Luz, Pau and other lovely places, and from the Mediterranean where are Nice and Cannes, I cannot fail to observe a more chast-

ened note, and yet not less hopeful nor less courageous. But dates and fixed periods are no longer the fashion. We must work and wait, and believe, and win; that is all. That is the thought on the Riviera and round about Biarritz now as elsewhere. That these places and their golf will benefit amazingly after the war there can be no doubt; their hope is built on the strongest foundations. Many Americans are there now; some thousands will flee there for their contentment the first winter when the guns have finished their cruel business.

The master of golf at Nice, Mr. Hay-Gordon, without whom one may be persuaded there would be no golf at Nice—worth the having anyhow—and who has worked in the manner of the Trojan to keep the thing going well during the war period and has succeeded beyond all belief, writes me a letter embracing much interesting news. He says:

"We have kept our eighteen-holes course going here all through the war, and intend to go on doing so, even if the war should not end, as we all hope, this summer. It has been always in a very fair order, and we keep on making small improvements. We have had a fair number of players, including a good many officers, convalescent and on leave; but the Michelham Home (a place for convalescent officers) is now too far off, being at Cap Martin, near Menton, and only the rich ones can afford to come over in taxis. This last winter we had a good many Canadian and American officers; but though we anticipated quite a good season, our prospects were all upset by the attack on Italy, which frightened many who had taken apartments and villas from coming at all, and then the sending of all the troops and supplies over this line played the deuce with the passenger traffic. However we manage to carry on and those who are here are very appreciative."

"The course at Monte Carlo," Mr. Hay-Gordon continues, "is, of course, open, and much frequented by the officers at the Michelham Home at Cap Martin, which is only about ten miles off. I cannot say that I have heard much good about the course and greens, but people enjoy going up there. Sospel has been closed since the beginning of the war. Cannes has kept nine holes going, but not, so players tell me, kept up to the mark. I hear that their lease is out in

two years; no doubt they will get another, but may have to pay through the nose for it. St. Raphael keeps its small course going. I have not heard what it is like. Hyères and Costebelle have both been closed since the war. I have heard rumours that the Hyères course will not be opened again. I hope that this is not true as many enjoyed going there; but Mr. Zick, who built the Golf Hotel there has given it up, and it is now in the hands of a French company. We have had a very fine and dry winter. There has not been any rain for nearly two months. As usual in these circumstances there have been quite sharp frosts at nights and cloudless days. Living is comfortable, and we have plenty of everything, so far, except bread and sugar, which are rationed; but all is about or more than double pre-war prices."

I note with some concern the statement about the possibility of the old course at Hyères not being reopened, but shall be more optimistic than my correspondent, for I cannot believe that any French company that took over the place could be so little enlightened as to think of trying to run the place without the golf course. As one who has spent many happy days there, weeks indeed, as have done some thousands of British and American subjects I would assure the French company—if they need such assurance—that this part of old Hyères without its golf course will have no chance of success. It was the golf and tennis of the place that attracted the people, and they were a very healthy, buoyant sporting set who patronised it and made life merry during the months of deep winter. The course was not one of the best in the world, and some unkind people used to make fun of its hurdles for "bunkers," but the round had its points, and there were some really attractive little features. One that we all remember is the "Shooting Gallery" hole as it is called, where you play through a close avenue of trees and out into the green in the sunshine beyond. Then the fine old trees with the silver bark which continually came into the view and

sometimes into the play, were another interesting feature. The course had also a certain advantage in age, for though turf in the Alpes Maritimes is not what it is in Britain in any circumstances, still it mends with years and it was occasionally quite good on this little course. On the other side of Hyères is Costebelle, whose rivalry for the golf patronage has been very great in recent years. The Costebelle course is longer, more difficult, and better, and had become under M. Peyron's wise supervision, very popular. Also the surroundings of Costebelle—the place where we live and sleep—are much better than those of the other place. But I don't see why the two should not go well as they did before the war, and shall certainly hope to hear that the French company has taken advice and is preparing for a post-war golf season, for the influx of war-worn islanders to the Mediterranean coast as soon as the fighting is over, will be quick and great, and now is the time to prepare for them. When the treaty of peace is signed will be too late.

*Très bien!* Let us now turn our attention to that other part of the south of France, the corner of the Bay of Biscay where is Biarritz and which sometimes goes by the name of the *cote d'argent*. Here again in Mr. W. M. Corrie, the secretary of the Biarritz club, I have a kind and helpful friend who gives me all the news.

"It has been a great struggle," Mr. Corrie says, "to keep the course open here and in decent order, first because of the shortage of labour (as instead of nine men I am reduced to one man, two women and three boys), and secondly because of the lack of good mowing machines. All ours are worn out, and it is impossible to get new ones or to have the old ones done up. The sea holes down below in the "Chambre d'Amour" have been closed until the end of the war, but we have a very fair eighteen-holes up above, and a good length. The greens are not at all bad considering all

things. We have had no end of officers 'en permission' during the last twelve months—English, French, American, Canadian, New Zealanders—and they nearly all pass their time on the links, and it is good to see the pleasure and benefit they get from it. From July to September for the last three years the Spanish colony have filled the place, and have kept six tennis courts busy, and incidentally enabled us to meet the year's expenses. Caddies now are chiefly women and girls, with a few disabled soldiers. At St. Jean de Luz there are eighteen holes open, and the course is in very good condition. Being close to the frontier, labour is done chiefly by the Spanish. However there are very few players, and they are chiefly residents. At Pau there are nine holes open; they are not very good as the sporting holes over Jordan way among the streams are closed. Massy and Jean Gassiat come at intervals 'en permission' and seem to play better than ever, especially the former, who is now with the heavy artillery and has a fine record of work at the front. Salmon is coming up all the rivers freely, and a good many have already been killed by rods."

I am sure that hundreds of American readers to whom, as to myself, all those sweet spots that are mentioned in these letters are as familiar as their own haunts at home will feel indebted to my correspondents for their budgets of most interesting news.

THERE WILL BE exhibition matches by the great professionals during this summer as previously, for the benefit of the various war charities, though I do not imagine that these games will be quite so numerous as heretofore. The first one of the year was played the other day at Romford near London for the benefit of the St. Dunstan's Hostel, one of the most praiseworthy of all war institutions, being established for the care and assistance of soldiers who have lost their eyesight in the war. The four players who took part in the golf on this occasion were J. H. Taylor, Ray, James Braid, and Alexander Herd, the two first playing against the two others. Two four-ball matches were played, one in the morning and the other in

the afternoon, and, generally speaking the golf was very good and showed that the old champions had even yet lost none of their form. In the morning Ray and Taylor were the winners by two and one, and the figures were as follows:—

TAYLOR AND RAY.

Out.....	4 4 3 5 5 3 4 4	4—36
In.....	4 4 5 4 5 3 4 3	4—36
Total.....		<u>72</u>

BRAID AND HERD.

Out.....	3 5 3 6 4 3 4 4	4—36
In.....	5 4 5 5 4 4 3 4	4—38
Total.....		<u>74</u>

In the afternoon the result was reversed, Braid and Herd, who played really finely on this occasion, winning by four and three. The cards for the full round read:—

BRAID AND HERD.

Out.....	4 4 3 4 4 3 4 4	4—34
In.....	5 4 4 4 3 5 4 3	4—36
Total.....		<u>70</u>

TAYLOR AND RAY.

Out.....	4 5 3 5 5 3 4 3	4—36
In.....	4 4 5 5 4 5 5 2	5—39
Total.....		<u>75</u>

Ray nearly holed out from the tee at the seventeenth hole. I do not know that there is much advantage in giving these rows of figures, but they remind one somewhat of old times, and again they show us that, with all their limited practice, these remarkable men can still play golf for a whole day on a course, with which three of them at all events were not very familiar, without making a six, although there are some long holes upon that course. A large sum was collected from the spectators, and an auction sale of the clubs that were used by the players and of various boxes of balls and other things that were offered realised more than £50.

LA84  
Foundation

