

OF MR. OUIMET

The Country Club and My Recent Experience with the Gutter Ball

By JOHN G. ANDERSON

A LAY OF THE LINKS

It's up, and away from our work to-day,
For the breeze sweeps over the down;
And it's hey for the game where the gorse blossoms
flame,
And the bracken is bronzing to brown;
With the turf 'neath our tread and the blue overhead,
And the song of the lark in our ears.
We throw them behind us,
The fetters that bind us,
The wear and tear of the years.

The palm and the leather come rarely together,

Gripping the drivers haft;
And it's fine to feel the jar of the steel
And the spring of the hickory shaft;
We are outward bound on a long, long, round
And it's time to be up and away;
With the wind in our teeth and our feet on the heath
We feel we are freemen to-day,
Ah! yes, with the wind in our teeth and our feet on
the heath
We know we are living to-day.

—*Old Golfing Song.*

MARCH twenty-ninth, albeit a Sunday, was a gala day in Boston. The Grand Opera Company, which has been delighting its patrons during the past winter, sailed on the steamship *Lapland*, the largest vessel that has entered the harbor, and an event in itself. To see them off thousands of French and Italian compatriots jammed into inadequate quarters, yelled themselves hoarse when the bands played their country's patriotic and national airs, and neglected no opportunity, presented by the distinguished speakers, to show their appreciation of the singers who were soon to bid farewell.

But what has this to do with golf? Not much I will admit, except that sailing on the same boat were the Open Champion, Mr. Francis Ouimet, and Mr. Arthur G. Lockwood, aspirants for the British Open and Amateur Championships. They, too, were surrounded by a hundred and more golfers who risked the loss of a good Sunday dinner in order to be on hand and give a rousing cheer when the ocean liner started on its way across the deep. Mr. Harry L. Ayer, member of the Executive Committee of the U. S. G. A., was on deck early, together with Mr. L. B. Folsom, president of the Woodland Golf Club. Well-known golfers, both amateurs and professionals, pushed forward to give a hearty handshake and God-speed to both of the voyagers. Among the number were President Lill of the A. A. U., J. N. Manning, John Morrill, Harry Johnson, A. L. Fowler, V. Lawrence, J. E. Kedian, B. S. Evans, Tom Kerrigan, George Bowden, Ralph Thomas, Harry Bowler, and Alec Campbell. The latter pressed a package of letters in Ouimet's hand, addressed to well-known personages in the British Isles, and said with the usual Scotch perspicacity, "They'll do nae harm, Francis; they'll do nae harm. And, one thing more, laddie; when ye're in Troon rin awa' doon and see ma mither for a wee spell. Tell her I'll be gamin' "

over to see her again soon." Needless to say Francis has that promise firmly fastened in his memory. He will forget, let us devoutly hope, nearly all the advice given by his well-meaning friends just as he was departing, for never were so many conflicting parcels of wisdom more freely given. All had one common end, however, the capturing of a British title, one somewhat different from the kind sometimes sought by certain American debutantes.

With a certain sense of curiosity I examined the clubs which Francis was taking with him. An ivory faced brassie which he will use as a driver in case of emergency, a new mashie built on the same lines as his former trusty weapon, and his old kit of clubs which he used at Brookline make up the golfing armament. He intends to play in a coat and no matter how warm the day may be he will refrain from shocking the British susceptibilities on that score.

One of the objects of wonder which undoubtedly will afford space writers more than one paragraph is Mr. Ouimet's new golf bag. The word "new" is used only in the literal sense, for, although the bag has not yet seen service on the links, it resembles an Egyptian tombstone. One or two bright spirits conceived the idea of writing their initials on the white canvas cover, to give the champion luck, of course, and the golfing crowd catching the spirit of the moment, proceeded to emulate their example, until Mr. Ouimet's golf bag was, so to speak, hieroglyphically mad. The last person to imprint his initials was none other than little Eddie Lawry, whose rise to caddie fame last fall was as meteoric as the rise of his golfing employer. He wrote the initials E. L. in a bold free hand and then looked yearningly at the big liner. Someone asked him if he intended to slip aboard and hide as a stowaway. "Gee, I'd like to," he said, as he glanced around and spotted his big brother, "but I wouldn't be let."

G O L F I L L U S T R A T E D

Just before sailing Messrs. Lockwood and Ouimet held an informal reception on the deck and then the cheers for their success rivaled the frantic ejaculations of the friends of the departing singers. Miss Shadow of the Opera Company sang "Dixie," but it would have been more appropriate if she had sung the following lines written by the golf poet-laureate of Boston, Joseph A. Campbell, to the tune of "Tommy Atkins":

Oh! He's always on the job when Duty calls,
 He's the golfing pride and glory of the Hub,
 He's modest and his modesty enthalls,
 And a deadly shot he is whate'er the club.
 He knows we like to hear the Lion roar,
 And to see the knots a'tying in his tail
 And Johnny Bull he'll show once more
 What he showed him once before,
 That the golfer who is best must prevail!



EQUESTRIANS ON THE LINKS AT AIKEN, S. C.

Mr. J. E. Davis, a former Master of the Meadow Brook Hunt; Mrs. J. E. Davis, a noted horsewoman; Mr. Oakleigh Thome, Master of the Millbrook Hunt; and Miss Marion Hollins, as well known in the hunting field as upon the links

Oh! He wasn't known in Europe till last Fall,
 But they know him now in far off Hindustan,
 In Bombay, in Baroda, in Bengal
 He's known to ev'ry blooming Englishman.
 He had read about this Vardon and of Ray,
 But they didn't seem to feaze the lad at all,
 He just simply kept on playing,
 Did not mind what folks were saying,
 And proved himself the topper of them all.

Chorus

Oh! Francis, Francis Ouimet,
 You're a golfer through and through,
 You rose to the occasion
 When our last hope was in you;
 May your good luck never fail you,
 May your shots be always true,
 God bless you, Francis Ouimet,
 All our caps we doff to you.

Mr. Ouimet's itinerary has been and will be of an interesting nature. A few days' seasickness did him no harm, and a makeshift net on board the *Lapland*, devised by one who had little or no knowledge of the game, did him no good. The contrivance resembled a tennis net more than anything else and was too low to afford a free hard shot. The first crack that Mr. Ouimet gave sent the ball hurtling over the net, whizzing by a few portholes and at last dropping with a sad farewell into the briny deep. The passage was somewhat rough and I am told that everyone preferred to stretch out on their steamer chairs, the Open Champion being among the number.

Landing was made April sixth at Dover and from there Messrs. Lockwood and Ouimet went to Sandwich where they stayed until April tenth. Then on to London for a few days, in which vicinity he played at Mid Surrey, Stoke Poges, and Walton Heath. The

GOLF ILLUSTRATED

journey was then resumed to Mr. Lockwood's old home, Weston-Super-Mare, Burnham, where the Open Champion is now putting in his practice work in preparation for the amateur event but three weeks off. Close by Weston-Super-Mare lies Westward Ho, one of the finest links in the world, and I fancy that the majority of practice rounds will be played there. Surely no better course could be selected on which to experiment in "wind shots" such as may be met at Sandwich.

A week prior to the amateur event Ouimet and Lockwood will leave for Sandwich. Immediately following that championship they will cross over to France and play for the French title May twenty-fifth to twenty-seventh. Then will follow a general tour of the Scotch courses preparatory to the Open Championship at Prestwick. This meeting closes June twentieth and after a couple of days spent at Hoylake Mr. Ouimet will leave for home, sailing from Liverpool around June thirtieth. This will give him ample time to rest up before he is called upon to defend his title in this country.

And now the time for which we have been waiting is near at hand. Boston, where are Ouimet's nearest and dearest friends, Massachusetts, who never ceases honoring her champion, and the whole United States, whose glory in the Open Champion is not waning, wish him that good luck which his own splendid game and excellent worth amply merit. May his drives and putts go ever true.

Any golfing information which pertains to The Country Club, Brookline, is usually worth while. Last year the time and money spent on the course in getting it in readiness for the Open Championship was unprecedented. Many thought that the course had reached perfection, but that can never be for any links. That there will be new changes will surprise some, but not those who know that a course can never be left alone. The standard of play improves; the course must improve too, or it will fall by the wayside.

A few weeks ago a very memorable meeting was held at The Country Club attended by over a hundred

members at which were discussed the future policies of the club. Radiograph slides of the steps in the progress of The Country Club were shown and then Mr. G. Herbert Windeler, chairman of the golf committee, traced the history of golf at the club. It is proposed to buy an additional piece of land which will be of sufficient size to permit of two excellent new holes. To procure the money for this acquisition a

tract of frontage which would then be of little use to the club could be sold. The alterations in the present course might consist in playing from the fifteenth tee straight down to the present seventeenth green, eliminating the fifteenth and short sixteenth as played now, as well as the dog leg seventeenth. It is the wish of the golf committee that golf shall interfere as little as possible with the race course and changes which have been made recently, notably in the shifting of the position of the fourteenth green (now moved many yards to the left) have given fulfillment of this desire.

Plans for a new locker house were produced. The present idea is to turn stable No. 1 into a large locker room where can be placed at least five hundred lockers. Then the present locker building with its cramped quarters, showers, etc., could be used as a dormitory for the help. This building would be moved to another location. The professional's shop, where "Nipper" Campbell regales his customers with the latest jokes from Scotland, will be transferred to a small building known as the "Hornets' Nest" which is situated near the home green, a much better position for all concerned. At the present moment of writing no definite action has been made on these proposed changes, but they will be voted upon at the next meeting of the club's executive committee.

Mr. Windeler's remarks concerning the club's history and development were highly interesting and of real historic value, for I cannot but feel that The Country Club has done more good for the game in Massachusetts than is commonly supposed. Its influence has broadened all over the land and this has been due to the policy of the golf committee, whose



Mr. Ouimet practising on board the *Lapland* on his way to England

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chairman for the last fifteen years has been Mr. Windeler.

The beginning of golf at the club came in 1892, when, on November twenty-ninth, it was voted, on motion of Mr. Davis, that Arthur Hunnewell, Lawrence Curtis, and Robert Bacon be appointed a committee on golf and that they be authorized to spend the necessary amount, up to \$50 for the layout of the course. This staggering sum was sufficient to procure six holes and so successful was the venture that a year later the club voted to have the secretary write to Lawrence Curtis and thank him for his efficient work as chairman of the golf committee. Nor was this all that the committee felt should be done to further the game, for no less than \$100 was voted, the same to be spent in the upkeep and improvements. Golf at that time, 1893, was very much a matter of arithmetic, a score of 50 for the six holes being considered nothing to be ashamed of, while a hole done in the twenties was not at all unusual.

Great strides were made that year and on January 2, 1894, an appropriation of \$500 was made. A professional was hired and the course was extended to nine holes. In honor of the latter event and to celebrate the opening of the new holes a special match was played on May fifth, between Willie Campbell and V. Davis of Newport, which was won by the former who went around in 84 to his opponent's 93. Much enthusiasm was manifested by the gallery, the forerunner of what was exhibited last fall. A month or so previous to this, on April twenty-second to be exact, Arthur Hunnewell did the last hole in one stroke and Arthur Stedman first appeared as the record holder with a round of 76 for nine holes. A few days after Frank Peabody went a round in 65.

The first interclub match, played May 19, 1894, was between teams representing The Country Club, Tuxedo, St. Andrews, and Newport, which was won by The Country Club. Then on December 3, 1894, the club voted to join the United States Golf Association and to send delegates to its annual meeting.

As far back as 1894 there were complaints concerning the congestion on the course, but no one ever dreamed that the interest in the sport would become so lively that an eighteen-hole course would result. In fact, golf was considered quite a minor sport, for in the records it shows that whereas the expenditure for a year's golf totaled \$500, no less a sum than \$1,500 was voted for one week's whippet racing. Moreover, Thursday mornings and afternoons were set aside for shooting, during which period no play at the seventh and ninth holes was allowed.

But in 1895 so much enthusiasm was rampant that plans were made to buy the Baker estate and convert the nine into an eighteen-hole links. Early the following year a circular was issued asking that 200 members subscribe an amount not exceeding \$20 each. The response was disappointing and nothing

was done. However, the matter was not dropped and two years later, January 18, 1898, to be exact, the club appropriated \$42,000 to buy land and construct the course. There were countless difficulties to be overcome, for the land was woody, but perseverance and patience combined with hard work accomplished wonders and on October 7, 1899, the new eighteen-hole course was opened with a match between Alec Campbell and John Jones. Golfers then imagined that the course was well-nigh perfect; but what a contrast there is to-day!

For two years the course pursued the even tenor of its way, and then came disaster. Not in a burnt club-house or an earthquake. Simply the introduction of the Haskell ball which put a premium upon distance.

Having gone so far the club could now go still farther, and in 1903 four thousand dollars was voted to extend the course. The task confronting the golf architects and committee at the third hole was stupendous, for the valley leading to the green had to be raised three feet. Since that time the ninth, tenth, and eleventh holes have been added at a cost not far from \$40,000, half of which was given outright by members of the golf committee and a few enthusiastic club members. The improvements still to be made have already been noted. The old saying "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," might with respect to The Country Club and its high minded lovers of sport be changed to, "Sufficient unto the year is the good thereof."

A certain curiosity superinduced by the experiments abroad prompted me recently to try out the gutty versus the rubber-cored ball. It was with difficulty that I procured the "gutties," but in one sporting goods establishment eight or nine were unearthed from obscurity and although somewhat free from paint they served their purpose well, neither splitting nor losing shape.

The results of my experiment, to sum up briefly, showed that in hardly a single instance does a comparison favor the discarded ball. There was a difference of about thirty-five yards in driver and brassie shots and almost as much in the long iron efforts. The hardest part of the whole play was in the mashie shots say from a distance approximating 130 yards. A firm flick with the wrists would send the rubber-core the required distance, but it took a good hammering to get the hard ball anywhere near the hole. Nor did I notice any appreciable difference in the run of the ball after it had been struck with a mashie. This was largely due to the soft ground. It was quite plain that the "cut" shot is a development due entirely to the rubber-core. And it is quite reasonable to suppose that the idea of the gutty flying straighter comes from the fact that there are so many poor attempts to "cut" the new ball, which in turn produce

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sliced shots. I believe myself that one is as straight as the other when hit correctly.

There was a difference, however, on the putting greens. The very knowledge that one could hit a free untrammelled shot when thirty or forty feet from the hole without condescending to what you might term "wrist finesse" makes a golfer stand more firmly in his shoes and relieves the nervous tension. Putting with the hard ball seemed much easier and simpler; but at that I am not prepared to argue for its return. No, not for a single minute. Some players would have to start at nine and take lunch with them to get round a championship course, and then the score would be unprintable. The professionals would be forced to engage more helpers for the hard balls wear out and destroy the wooden faces of the clubs. I split my driver head after hitting just five tee-shots. Nevertheless, I enjoyed the round and so will any golfer who will try a like experiment. When it is over he will pat himself on the back, figuratively speaking, and grin with satisfied complacency. He doesn't have to play with a gutty; he will stick to the elastic band projectile. Thank heaven there is such a ball!