

A Prophecy from Britain

By GEORGE W. GREENWOOD

WITH the dawn of a New Year it is not unnatural that we should take a peep into the future in an endeavor to discover what is concealed behind the mists of time. In due course, and in proper order the mists will roll away, and then we shall see revealed the very things that we are now trying to probe. Will the revelation be surprising? Most probably it will. For example, we may wake up one morning to find that an entirely new golf ball has been evolved, and that we shall be compelled to play with it whether we like it or not. This statement may come as a surprise to a good many people, but in view of what is happening in the councils of the United States and Great Britain, I should not be the least bit astonished to see a *fait accompli* in the direction of a new ball before another year is upon us.

The campaign for a ball that will not travel as far as the present one has received a new lease of life by reason of the support given it by Bobby Jones. It is significant and important to find that Jones has not forgotten the position of the average golfer, because he declines to have anything to do with a return to the old gutta ball, an implement that would mean inflicting torture on countless thousands of players. In England, a "Gutta Ball Club" has been formed, the members of which play matches, which no one takes seriously, except perhaps the players themselves, against sides using the rubber-cored ball. The general public may look upon it as a form of lunacy, but the gutta players say they derive a lot of amusement and enjoyment from the experience, and, besides, what other folk think does not concern them. Perfectly true, but when the ordinary golfer finds such distinguished players as Wethered, Tolley, Hezlet, Blackwell, T. A. Torrance, Braid, Ray, Herd, J. H. Taylor and a good many more flirting with the gutta he becomes alarmed, even though it may be an ill-founded alarm.

It is interesting to know that Bobby Jones, while declaring himself opposed to the re-introduction of the gutta in any form, is in favor of a bigger ball, only a stage removed from a floater; in other words, one that will just sink below the surface when placed in water. By cutting 20 to 25 yards off the drive of an expert, Jones believes that many of the lost shots, especially those with the brassie, and the big iron will be restored to the game, and as a consequence golf will become far more interesting and more versatile than at present. He may be right so far

as the experts are concerned, actually a negligible quantity compared with the rank and file throughout the civilized world, but the man-in-the-street is perfectly satisfied with the present ball, which gives him the maximum of pleasure.

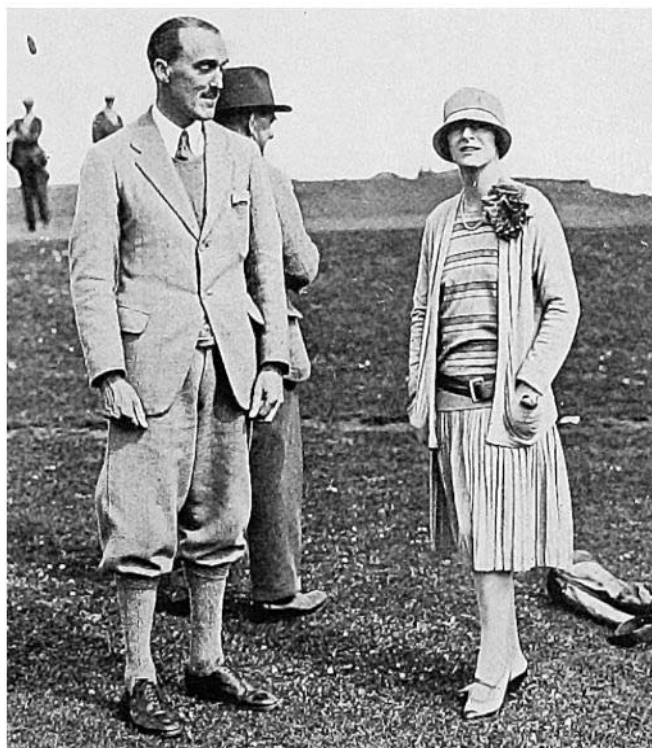
He does not desire a change; in fact, he hates the very idea. Neither is he satisfied with the assurance that, while the expert will lose as much as 25 yards with the big ball, the average man will only lose 5. Why in one case there should be a considerable loss, and in another hardly anything to speak of he cannot quite make out, and, frankly, he does not believe it. However, all the indications seem to point to the introduction of a new standard ball on the lines mentioned. When it will come none can say with certainty, but

that it will arrive is as sure as the rising of tomorrow's sun.

There is a widespread belief on this side of the Atlantic that we are to have an American mass attack, led by Bobby Jones and Hagen, on the British Open championship at Sandwich, early in May. Let us hope that on this occasion that rumor is not a lying jade, for the American players have become so much a part and parcel of the British championship that their absence would be as noticeable as ice from a cocktail. We do not begrudge the repeated loss of the championship, but we should certainly not be indifferent to the abstention on the part of the men who have set a standard, which, though (Continued on page 45)



THE NEEDLE IN THE HAY STACK
Miss Joan Stocker and her assistants digging for a ball buried in a bunker side, during one of the Ladies' Inter-county matches



MR. AND MRS. IAN HAY
Enjoy the golfing activities at North Berwick. Sir John Fitzgerald has his back to the camera



AT NORTH BERWICK, SCOTLAND
Miss Maude Hunnewell and M. André Vagliano going through the gate at the 16th hole—known as the Gate Hole

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(Continued from page 21)

precious hard to live up to, is something worth striving for. It was at St. George's, in 1922, that Hagen won his first British championship.

Bobby Jones' first and only experience of Sandwich was not a happy one. It was in the St. George's Gold Vase two years ago, played on a day when a bitterly cold wind almost froze the marrow in one's bones. Bobby shivered to such a degree that the clubs nearly [d] out of his hands, and on returning to the club house, with face all blue and teeth chattering, he declared that never in the whole course of his career had he experienced such appalling conditions. Given decent weather St. George's is a type of course that will suit Jones' golf, and I should not be surprised to see him winning the championship for the third time in succession. Perhaps this is his ambition; at any rate, it is a worthy one, for it is a feat that has never yet been accomplished. If there is one man who can do the trick it is Jones, for he appears capable of doing anything. He has won everything worth having except one—the British Amateur championship, and, I suppose, deep down in his heart he is anxious to go the full circle. Now is his chance, for the Amateur follows a fortnight later at Prestwick, the famous links on the west coast of Scotland.

With the return of Mitchell after an enforced absence of six months, playing the same powerful golf as ever, we again ask ourselves: "Will he at last break through the ring of fate and win the championship." Well may Mitchell be styled the "Uncrowned King of British Golf," for he has done everything that a man can do without winning the greatest prize of all. The most ambitious youth in British golf is T. H. Cotton, a boy not yet 21 years of age, who has definitely made his mark, and will, unless I am sadly mistaken be a considerable force in international golf.

Having won the British Professional championship, Compston is now throwing out challenges right and left. Firstly, he has challenged Hagen for the "Unofficial Championship of the World" with a stake of \$5,000, and, secondly, he has challenged any British golfer for a similar sum in a match over 72 holes. The last time Compston issued a similar challenge Mitchell accepted, and, metaphorically, tore the adversary limb from limb. As regards the Hagen challenge, Compston intends sailing for the United States with a view to fixing the match. I have no doubt that Hagen will accommodate him if the conditions are sufficiently attractive. In any case, one cannot help but admire Compston's courage in seeking the tiger in its lair.
