

THE GOLF COURSE

A MONTHLY BULLETIN DEVOTED TO THE DISCUSSION OF MODERN METHODS AS APPLIED TO GOLF COURSE CONSTRUCTION AND UPKEEP

MODERN GOLF CHATS

By A. W. TILLINGHAST

"TWISTING THE FAIRWAY"

LAST month I attempted to illustrate the value of casting away from straight lines and bending our fairways around elbows. But the twisted fairways offer other inducements than the mere introduction of encroaching areas of hazard or rough, which may be carried to distinct advantage. It provides a remedy for the great and ancient evils, parallel holes.

Scarcely a course, built a dozen years ago, was without parallels. Side by side they stretched, with a meagre strip of rough between, which caught the ball which was slightly off line but useless in hindering the very wild player from gaining a pleasing lie on the fairway beyond. From here he usually was quite as likely to find the green with his second shot as his straight down-the-alley opponent.

The designers of old time courses either closed their eyes to the evil or else were powerless to find a remedy. It is so easy to fit the holes in parallel lines, particularly when one has to lay off a tract which is nearly square. This treatment requires no more brain-fag than marking off a tennis-court. It was not golf, but it was the best they knew only a few years since.

I well remember the remark of one of the Oxford-Cambridge golfers who

visited America with Mr. John Low. He had been asked his opinion of a certain then prominent course. Looking out on the parallels, he smiled sadly but evaded a direct reply to the enthusiastic green committeeman at his side, but when the latter had departed, Hunter (it was Norman Hunter) turned to me and said:

"It reminds me of that bit of doggerel, 'In ag'in; out ag'in; gone ag'in, Finnegan.'"

But back to the twisting fairways. I never have seen a case of "parallelitis" which could not be helped by the simple expedient of cutting the fairways irregularly. To be sure, some patients are beyond cure, but their condition may be relieved in a measure.

As an example of a very twisted fairway, let me offer a sketch of a three-shot hole. The three-shot hole is one of the most trying which the architect has to consider, for probably there are comparatively more thoroughly bad three-shot holes than those of any other type. Some seem to labor under the impression that a three-shot hole calls for nothing but brawn, and consequently ridiculously long holes of six hundred yards and over are to be found. As a matter of fact, the green of the three-shot hole should be small and

(Continued on page 51)

Modern Golf Chats

(Continued from first page)

very closely guarded, for it must be conceived that a long drive has been followed by an almost equally long and well placed brassy or cleek in order that the flag, which is beyond the range of any two shots, should be sought by an accurate mid-iron or mashie. In order that the player who had missed or half-hit either his drive or second shot, must be made to find himself out of the range of the green, a great hazard finds its way across the fairway, and this hazard should be anywhere from fifty to one hundred yards wide, for the reason already stated. If the far brink of this hazard is a trifle over four hundred yards from the teeing ground, two strong shots will carry it and permit the player to pitch to the green, which, let us say, is five hundred and twenty-five yards in all. Obviously, the great area of the hazard will not permit the player who was short of it in two, to reach home with his third, and it must be remembered, too, that the green itself is very small and too closely guarded to permit of its being held by a very long stroke.

The three-shot hole illustrated is quite original with the writer, and if there is another like it, I surely have never heard of it. The scheme provides a double dog-leg with a closely guarded green which cannot be seen unless two very long shots open it up. It is likely that further explanation is unnecessary, for the sketch, rough as it is, shows the problem.

It may seem curious that early American golf courses were laid out on such puny scales and along such unintelligent lines. The game was biff and bang, with little else to think of; no problems to solve. But, after all, it is not so much to be wondered at. Our early players were faddists whose conceptions of golf were exceedingly crude. How could they be expected to appreciate the finer points of the game as did those in the old country, where golf had been played for so many years?

For a long time the greatest obstacle

in the way of modern courses in America was the opposition of the mediocre player. He fancied that any attempt to stiffen the courses must make them so difficult that the play would be beyond his powers. But now he realizes that the modern golf architect is keeping him and his limitations in mind all the while he is cunningly planning problems which require the expert to display his greatest skill in negotiating holes in par figures.

