

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 "parallellitis" 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

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R. O. SINCLAIRE, *Editor*

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AS the Scotch would say, "Did ever
Mon hear the Like?"

We refer to statements which are often made to the effect that beauty does not matter on a golf course. This is an erroneous idea. Players frequently say that they are not interested in their surroundings; good golf is what they want and a course that necessitates sound play. This is rarely the golfer's true sentiment, however, for though some have been unkind enough to jeer at golf architects for attempting to make beautiful hazards, these same individuals will rave about the beauties of natural courses.

We believe that the chief object of every golf architect should be to imitate the beauties of nature so closely as to make his work seem a part of nature itself, and to-day a golf architect's work is judged largely by his ability along these lines.

Beauty means everything on a golf course, for even the man who emphatically denies that he cares a hang

for beauty is unconsciously influenced by his surroundings. A beautiful hole appeals to the poor player as well as to the scratch man, and we cannot recall a single really first-class hole which is not at the same time, either in the grandeur of its undulations and hazards, or the character of its surroundings, a beautiful one.

We do not mean to suggest that the average golfer would be likely to show the same appreciation of surroundings as did the curate playing with the deaf old Scotchman. This is an old story but will bear repeating.

The curate was audibly expressing his admiration of the scenery, the greens and things in general until they finally arrived at a green surrounded by a rookery. The curate remarked, "Isn't it delightful to hear the rooks?" The deaf old Scotchman says, "What's that?" The curate again remarks, "Isn't it delightful to hear the rooks?" The old Scotchman replied, "I can't hear a word you're saying for those damned crows."

PROFESSIONALS and green-keepers frequently request us to advise them where they can secure situations. We shall be glad to furnish the names of competent men.

The Making of a Model Golf Course

THE making of a new golf course is by no means as easy as it seems to be on the face of it—and as the proposition is so often tackled in such a light-hearted way, I think my twenty years' experience may be of more than passing interest to those who are about to take the plunge.

CHOOSING THE SITE

If possible, choose a site that is easily accessible—otherwise a good proposition may fail for adequate support.

THE AREA OF THE GROUND

This depends to a large extent on the configuration of the ground, but generally speaking 120 to 150 acres are required for a really first class course.

THE CONFIGURATION OF THE GROUND

An ideal piece of golfing ground should be boldly undulating, without being hilly—and should contain as many interesting natural features as possible.

If the ground is wooded, so much the better, as it will then be possible to isolate each hole with belts of trees and so obtain that delightful feeling of seclusion which is lacking when one plays over a prairie course.

THE SOIL

A golf course can be made on practically any class of soil, but best results, both from a golfing and turf-growing point of view, are obtained on light to medium soils.

DRAINAGE

This is an important point, especially on heavy soils, and should be carefully considered when choosing the site.

If the ground is undulating, the drainage should not present any difficulties, but if it is more or less level or inclined to be marshy, such serious difficulties may crop up that it is advisable to employ a competent engineer to report on the ground before buying or leasing it.

FREEHOLD VS. LEASEHOLD

The wisest course to pursue is to buy the land outright, so that the fullest benefit is obtained from all money invested in the making of the course and in the buildings.

Generally speaking, there is little or no risk in buying the land, if the site is properly chosen, as it is sure to appreciate in value and be an extremely valuable asset. As a matter of fact, I know of several clubs that have paid for the land occupied by their courses, the making of the courses, and the building of the clubhouses by purchasing large estates and selling off the surplus land to members and others.

Leasehold propositions, on the other hand, are always dangerous, and at the end of the term the club is faced with several unpleasant alternatives; that is to say, it either has to pay a much higher rent, go out of existence, or else find a new site and start all over again.

FINANCE

It is impossible to say much on this subject, as the capital sum required to finance a club depends so largely on the character of the land, the class of course to be constructed, the size and style of the clubhouse, etc., and in consequence, it differs in almost every case.

There are, however, two important points that should be remembered.

It is worse than useless to start a proposition of any magnitude unless it is adequately financed, and sufficient money should be definitely "earmarked" for making and sowing the golf course. If a start is made with insufficient funds, everything is skimped, and as estimates for building and furnishing clubhouses are invariably exceeded, a separate and sufficient sum should be put aside for making and sowing the turf.

If this is not done and money runs short, the course will suffer in some way or another. It will not be properly fertilized, or it will be sown with cheap

seeds, or skimped in some other way.

To put it in a nutshell, if there is a shortage of money, it is always the golf course that suffers and not the clubhouse.

EXPERT ADVICE

A wise committee will engage the services of the following experts:

An architect who is used to clubhouse designing.

A golf architect of proved ability.

A turf expert of repute and integrity.

An engineer, if necessary, to take care of the drainage.

All of these experts are of equal importance, and each one should be given a reasonably free hand in his own department.

THE CLUBHOUSE AND OUT-BUILDINGS

This subject is too big to deal with in tabloid form, but I have noticed that the most popular clubhouses are those where simplicity, convenience and comfort have been placed before elegance, splendor and luxury.

THE GOLF ARCHITECT

Choose a man of proved ability. Give him a free hand and do not worry him with too many suggestions.

Examine his plans carefully, and accept them more or less as they stand, or else turn them down altogether and get another opinion.

THE TURF EXPERT

Go very slowly when choosing your turf expert—otherwise your turf, which is all important, may be a constant source of worry and expense. Choose a man, or rather, a firm, as this class of work is usually taken care of by the best class of seed merchants, and give them as free a hand as you do your golf architect.

There are a great many men who claim to be turf experts simply because they know the names of a few grasses. They should be avoided as the devil avoids Holy Water. These so-called, or rather, self-styled turf experts do more harm to golf in this country than anybody else, as they persuade com-

mittees to sow fancy prescriptions, which in many cases cannot under any circumstances produce a first class golfing turf, for the simple reason that they often advise grasses that are totally unsuitable for the production of fine turf, and even if they avoid the fundamental error, they are at sea in regard to the proper proportions in which the various grasses should be used.

If you are wise, you will put your trust in a firm that specializes in the production of golfing turf and one that has produced results—and then, if you are still suspicious, ask them to give you the name and address of the president of a club or clubs that have trusted them, and so obtain an absolutely unbiased report.

MIXTURES AND NAMED GRASSES

Those who recommend the use of named grasses to be used in a home-made mixture do so because they have no confidence in themselves and simply want to make a profit as easily as possible quite regardless of results—whereas, those who recommend their own mixtures and object to giving their composition do so because they have confidence in themselves, their mixtures and in the results.

To put it shortly, the mixture man wants to make and maintain his reputation by selling a branded article, and the named grass man wants to make a profit without any responsibility or brain work.

A FAIR DEAL

If you ask a firm for the make-up of their mixtures and then proceed to buy the named grasses in the open market—are you giving either them or yourself a fair deal? Emphatically no! You are simply sucking one man's brain and then placing yourself in the hands of the unscrupulous.

The unscrupulous men, who have given the seed trade such a bad name in this country (abroad the trade is honored and trusted), know that the buyer is quite ignorant of this very technical subject, and he is quite ready

to give impossible percentages of growth and purity—knowing that the buyer cannot check him, and he often substitutes a cheap variety for a more expensive one—again knowing that he cannot be checked, as it is impossible to identify some seeds even by microscopic examination—and by the time the grass is grown and can be identified, it is too late.

Sour Soils, Their Causes and Treatment

By PETER LEES

THIS is a subject that applies more to inland courses than those situated by the sea, as the soil is of a heavier nature and consequently apt to get into a sour condition. There are several reasons for soil becoming sour and the following are some of the principal ones:

The first and most important is want of proper drainage. It is absolutely essential, if the soil is to be kept in a sweet condition suitable for the maintenance of a good healthy turf, to have proper drainage. In making a new course this is a very important point that should be carefully gone into and a systematic scheme of drainage carried out.

Grass will not thrive on wet sour soil no matter how much money and labor may be expended on fertilizers, etc. It will gradually and surely go back and weeds of all kinds will soon take its place and in a short time the greens will not be fit to play upon. The second cause of sourness in soils is one that is brought about by injudicious watering.

It is most important to have a liberal supply of water at hand, but this does not imply that it should be used indiscriminately even if there should be a good system of drainage, as time and again even on sandy soils where drainage was perfect I have seen the surface turned into a wet, sour condition simply because the watering had been overdone. As it does not rain every day then why should it be necessary to water every

day; it is not natural. It is this *sprinkling* that does the harm and creates a sour surface. Soak the green well, say twice a week if it should require water, as by thoroughly soaking it the water will get down to where it is wanted, at the roots, and the surface will be kept open.

Another reason for soil becoming sour is too much rolling. Especially when the surface is wet a great deal of harm can be done by rolling. Grass, like a human being, must have air, so if the surface is rolled into a condition resembling cement, sourness will soon appear and the grass, especially the finer varieties, will soon die out.

There is another reason for ground becoming sour. It has been said that worms are the natural drainers of the soil and if exterminated the turf will assuredly suffer. I have proved this to be absolutely wrong and have arrived at this bold assertion from years of experience. Take a putting green or fairway that has been used for a few years and observe how the worms have multiplied as compared with the sides that have had no attention bestowed on them. They have thrown up their casts all over and to make play at all possible sweeping and rolling has to be resorted to. This continual sweeping and rolling must undoubtedly change the character of the surface and sourness will set in if continued. My advice in this case is get rid of the worms and kill them entirely if a good healthy grass is desired. This cannot be obtained if they are allowed to burrow and throw up their casts all over the surface.

In conclusion I may say that if grass is to thrive the ground must be kept sweet and yet so that the air can reach the roots; this can only be done by drainage below and proper treatment above. Roll with light wooden roller if rolling is necessary, use plenty of *lime*, *feed* the grass well to keep it strong and healthy and water discreetly. If these points are carefully seen to, no trouble need be feared from sourness in the soil and a fine carpet of turf should be maintained at all times.

Willie Park

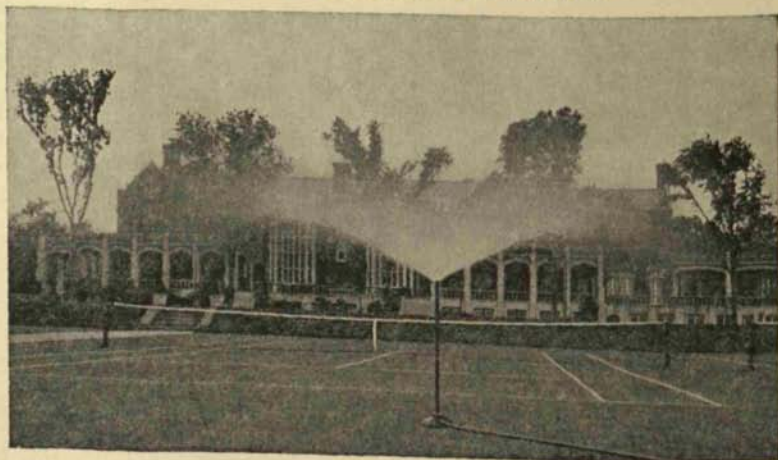
AMERICA has good reason to congratulate herself on the acquisition of another really high-class golf architect in the person of Willie Park. Although Park is quite well known here, we think that a brief account of his career will be of general interest.

Willie Park was born in 1864 at Musselburgh. His father was four times open champion of Britain, beginning at Prestwick in 1860, and ending at the same place fifteen years later. His uncle, Mungo Park, upheld the family honor in 1874. From such a family of golfers it is not surprising that Willie Park, junior, should prove an apt pupil. After becoming of age, young Willie, as he was called, took up the task and in 1887 annexed his first championship after some sensational play. Two years later he won again, although it was necessary to play off a tie with Andrew Kirkaldy.

Since 1889 no championship fell to his lot other than the opposition championship held at Musselburgh in 1892, but he won many great victories in matches with such redoubtable players as J. H. Taylor and Ben Sayers. Later he played on the Scotch team against England in 1903-04-05-07-10. Strangely enough, although Park had the reputation of being the best putter in England, a miss of a yard putt lost him a tie with Vardon for the open championship in 1898.

During all this time Park was busily engaged in the golf supply business and in connection with this work he gradually entered the field of golf architecture, and made it his special study. His first important course was Sunningdale and Huntercombe, Worplesdon, Coombe Hill, La Boulie, Lombardside and many others followed in rapid succession. These courses are lasting monuments to his great skill and are considered among the finest in the world.

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Modern Golf Chats

(Continued from first page)

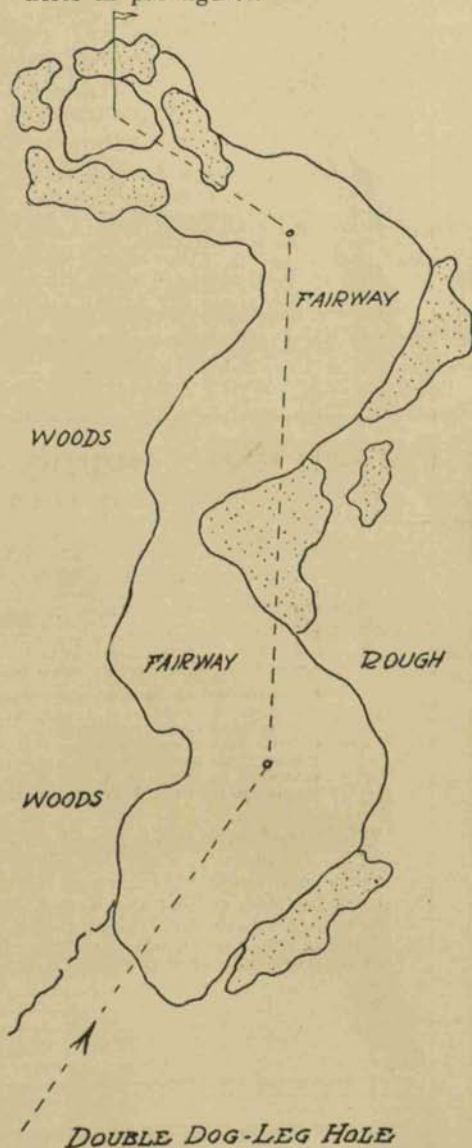
very closely guarded, for it must be conceived that a long drive has been followed by an almost equally long and well placed brassy or cleek in order that the flag, which is beyond the range of any two shots, should be sought by an accurate mid-iron or mashie. In order that the player who had missed 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.





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6—The weight of the super-structure and operator is evenly divided over the three Lawn Mowers. The combination of the carrying frame and a very simple draw rod mechanism makes one of the most desirable features of this machine, and it is this combination that makes absolutely positive the accurate position of the rear machine relative to the two front machines, insuring at all times, and under all conditions, the proper overlapping of the cuts. This valuable feature is found only in this machine.

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