

THE NOMAD THRIVES

Joe Kirkwood Tells the Boys Back Home How He's Doing

Joe Kirkwood writes, via GOLFDOM, to the fellows. Here's Joe's letter written from Rangoon, Burma.

THIS travels along to say hello to you and the rest of the boys and to report some of my doings and undoings during the last few months. Have been meaning to write for days but out in these hot tropical countries, one is apt to postpone things one ought to do. I am still in the land of the living although living in these parts is rather over-rated.

Since leaving Australia (on a cattle steamer) I have travelled many miles. Have always had a yen to see the Dutch East Indies and the Malay States, so while I was out there I took in Bali, Borneo, Sumatra, and many other islands. I enjoyed my trip immensely, played and exhibited my zigs and zags along the way, and was well received everywhere. There is considerable interest in the game in Java, also the Straits Settlements. Singapore GC is surprisingly good, being one of the finest golf courses that I have seen in any part of the world. It is beautifully kept with putting greens equally as good as those in the States, which is indeed surprising considering the terrific heat that they have to contend with in Singapore for twelve months of the year. It might be of interest to some of the American clubs to know that the Singapore club employs ninety odd coolies for the upkeep and care of their courses, but the daily wage is less than eight cents per day per coolie.

From Singapore I had intended returning to the States by way of China and Japan. But having never been to Siam, Burma, or India I decided to head in that direction instead, so for the last month or so I have been blazing a new trail throughout the principal cities of India. Spent a whole week in Calcutta and did very well. The heat in India at this time of the year is terrific; in fact a golf player in India is judged by the thickness of his skull. Needless to say I won all matches, which again proves my theory that you have to be thick skull to play this game.

However it wasn't without regret that I left Calcutta, for in all my travels throughout many lands never have I before received such a warm reception and it wasn't the atmosphere. The Royal Calcutta GC is indeed a magnificent club. It has an active membership of over 1700 members. The course is a dandy; perfectly flat, but most interesting, with every variety of shots. From Calcutta I hopped a train bound for Madras. The course there is not so good as it is laid out in a race track. It has only 15 holes, sand greens and baked fairways. I did a 55 which they thought was marvelous. It was, under the circumstances.

You should save your pennies and make a trip out to India. It is extremely interesting and I don't think that I ever have enjoyed any country quite so much. The good fellowship and friendliness in the clubs is unforgettable. Some day soon I'm coming back. At present I am on my way to Ceylon, then to South Africa stopping at Mombasa on the way. I have received a good guarantee from South Africa for fifteen exhibitions. From there I intend heading for East Africa and Egypt, Italy, Switzerland, Spain, France, Belgium, and across to England for the British open. My plans after that are rather indefinite but will probably return to the States. Sorry I won't be back for the Open at Pittsburgh but just can't make it.

My best to brother Joe, Tommy, Horton, the Haig, Gene, and the rest of the divot diggers and roamers of the rough. By the way I had some great fishing in Australia with Sir Kingsford Smith, also hunting in Borneo and Burma. The best I could get was an eighteen-foot python, will let you see its carcass as proof later. Did some hunting down in the head hunter and cannibal countries, but evidently my head wasn't the right type, because they just couldn't use me. Cheerio, and much luck.

Joe K.

P. S. Am enclosing a list of the 58 countries that I have visited during the last 12 months; thought it might be of interest.