

Importance of Playing Golf.

THE GAME THAT HAS WON ITS WAY ROUND THE WORLD.

By Mark Allerton.

Everybody is playing golf now, but there was a time when the game was not regarded with such enthusiasm. An old Scots Parliament, lacking any opportunity for legislation in the direction of licensing or education, passed the Act, 14 Jac. 2, which provided that "Fute ball and golf be utterly cryed down and not be used." In 1491 it was included in a statute among a list of "unprofitable sports." We read that, in all, three Acts of Parliament were directed against the game of golf, and yet King James IV., who had set his own royal seal to one of these Acts, broke his own laws by playing in 1503 a ding-dong match against the Earl of Bothwell.

Such records as these prove only the tremendous fascination of the game, a fascination which led Mary, Queen of Scots to court public scandal by playing golf at Seton Palace when Bothwell was not cold in his grave. A friendly historian tells me that Charles I. was playing golf at Leith when the news of the Irish Rebellion of 1642 arrived.

DUKE OF YORK.

His son, the Duke of York, was part-

"Scotification of England," and the enthusiasts who braved the derision of the small boys round Greenwich have been rewarded by posterity. This club has always been well supported by Scotsmen, and Mr. A. J. Robertson puts on record the fact that in 1850 the chief supporters of the club were Lord Wenyness, Lord Dalhousie, Lord Colville, Lord David Kennedy, General Sir Hope Grant, Sir Robert Hay, Sir Robert Anstruther, Sir Alexander Kinloch, Mr. James Blackwood, and a host of other well-known Scots.

IN ENGLAND.

To Manchester, to Westward Ho! to Wimbledon Common, the home of the London Scottish, to Hoylake, and to other parts of England, golf spread, at first slowly, and then with marvellous rapidity. Twenty years ago there were scarcely three hundred clubs in all the length and breadth of the land. To-day there are 3,000. London alone has fifty great tracts of valuable land, mown and rolled and dotted with magnetic bunkers, over which many thousands of golfers play every week. The club-houses rival those of the most luxurious West End clubs, the easy chairs are as comfortable, the luncheons are as appetising, the wines are as choice.

Recent tournaments have drawn attention to the Riviera, in Egypt there are half a dozen, where on mud baked "greens" enthusiasts contrive to indulge

FINANCIAL GOLFERS.

The position of golf in the world of finance is perhaps unique. It has changed the coast line of these islands. It has peopled the desolate places and made glad the hearts of sorrowing villagers. Enterprising men, finding themselves in out-of-the-way hamlets by the sea, have formed themselves into syndicates and laid out golf courses. And other men, tired of crowded links, have flocked there, until the new course has in its turn become crowded. The bleak foreshore has given place to a well-trimmed links, and where the tiny cottages of the fishermen used to be are now palatial hotels. Every room is filled with keen golfers, and since many have brought with them their wives—unsympathetic golf-widows who have no enthusiasm for the fine turf and big sand bunkers—these must be amused.

Not only the hotel proprietor, the builder and the shopkeeper have reason to rise and call golf blessed, but the railway companies and the steamship owners have reason to know its value. Most of the railway companies have laid out courses of their own. At least one steamship company has seen fit to advertise a special sailing to a well known golf-course.

Golf is bringing the people back to the land. The tendency now is to remove from the town to a residence near a golf-course. The suburbs have lost much of their dullness because most of them are adjacent to a decent links. We are enduring long tram journeys every day in order to get a game in the evenings. A

new district, "charming, residential, near a golf-course," as the advertisements have it, is springing upon the Londoner every week or two, and builders are putting one brick on the top of another as fast as they can in order to keep up with the demands of the people who have heard of the sixteenth hole or the bunker guarding the fourth at Bunker Hill and Styvie Green, and who want to go to live there.—From London "Express."

Dr. J. C. Reisner has been carrying on exhaustive excavations for some six years in the neighbourhood of Naga-ed-Deh, in Egypt. The site of the work is supposed to be that of the first settlement of man in Egypt, some 9,000 years ago. A number of prehistoric mummies have been discovered, preserved in salt, and wrapped in matting of halfa grass. These are specially interesting as indicating the first stages in the art of embalming, which afterwards attained such perfection in Egypt. They seem also to indicate that these primitive people held the belief that the body would be wanted again. A careful examination of these very well preserved skeletons reveals the important fact that the type has not changed in the long interval of 9,000 years. The contents of the intestines are also preserved, showing the food they ate and the medicine they took when they were sick. The diseases of which they died could also sometimes be diagnosed. Some had perished of kidney disease, others of gall-stones or diseased bones.



CHILD STUDY BY ELLERBECK, PHOTOGRAPHER, AUCKLAND.

nered in a foursome by John Paterson, a shoemaker, against two of his English courtiers, and was successful in anticipating a revenge for Flodden. James gave all the stakes to the shoemaker, and they must have exceeded those in vogue at our most fashionable clubs, for the shoemaker built a house in the Canon-gate with the money, and carved above the door the motto: "Far and sure."

All this, and more, we are told by history and tradition, but when we come to the seventeenth century, we find definite traces of golf in Scotland. The clubs then in existence were few, and the patrons of the game were to be found among the leisured gentry of Edinburgh, St. Andrews and Aberdeen.

When the court of James VI. was resident at Greenwich the time was passed with profit in playing golf, and in the year 1608 there was founded near by the ancient club of the Royal Blackheath.

The Royal Blackheath gave birth to what Mr. Balfour has described as the

in their favourite game. In the West Indies and in Africa there are golf-courses, poor enough and ill-constructed maybe, but nevertheless patent witnesses of the far reaching influence of the game.

Golf has as firm a hold on the citizens of the United States as it has on ourselves. New York rivals London as the metropolis of the game, and in Arkansas, Arizona, Connecticut, Dakota, and so on through the alphabet may be found keen golfers, loyal to their sport, but plotting to overthrow St. Andrews from the high position to which all good golfers on this side have raised it.

Golf, like the poor, is with us wherever we may go. But the very simile detracts from this proof of its importance. Nor does the fact that the annual outlay in club subscriptions, patent putters, and new balls must run into many hundreds of thousands of pounds, prove that neither height, nor depth, nor Principality nor Powers, matter to us one jot in comparison with the game of golf.

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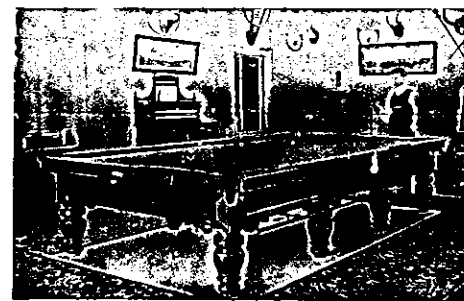
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