

It Happened in Golfland

BY VERDANT GREENE

There is abundant need on the Atlantic slope for a course devoted entirely to trade organizations, as was realized two years ago, when negotiations were begun for a links near the Shinnecock Hills station on Long Island. The deal did not go through, however, because of the price asked. Besides, the distance—85 miles from New York—was deemed to be too far for best results, especially in spring and fall, when the train service is inferior. The Chicago clubs last month were obliged to take concerted action to prevent trade organization dates from conflicting with regular club fixtures. A similar move should have been made in New York long ago, but there is never any attempt in the Metropolitan district to untangle the golfing calendar. At a New Jersey course in September a trade club selected the very dates taken for the home organization's tournament and did not learn of the blunder until it was too late to change, so the whole trade affair had to be called off. Several hundred thousand dollars are given every year in trade organization prizes, nearly all such clubs having two to five competitions every season, if not one of them has a permanent place to lay its head. At that, many of them pay liberally for the links they use, which money ought to be applied toward a permanent home. While most of them would prefer a change of scene, several have found it more convenient to rotate over the same courses, east and west, each year.

There is an especially profitable field for a well managed public links near this city, and one would unquestionably pay close to such a large centre as Buffalo, after a year or two. Indeed, such facilities are sadly needed in all big city districts without public links. The Salisbury course, at Garden City, the first venture of the kind in America, required two years before its success was assured. After three years, however, it was able to charge \$2 for rounds on Saturdays and Sundays. Last season the old Hollywood course, near Deal Beach, N. J., which came into the market when that club opened its new links, was turned over to the public for a fee and as the turf was not allowed to catch the mangle, the promoters closed the year ahead. Westchester county has no abandoned course, left sufficiently intact, to be put into commission, but parties have their eye out in that direction. Unquestionably the Quaker City fathers will see a new light ere long, and again take up the matter of a public links, but that would not harm a semi-public course, well run. Indeed, a public links would help rather than hinder a pay-as-you-enter course, for an absolutely free carry-all attracts too miscellaneous a throng to please real students of the game. Although the metropolitan district has three public links, there isn't one in the State of New Jersey, where there is more golf in proportion to its area than any other Commonwealth in the United States. Newark has been on the brink of a park course, however, for years.

By declaring all golfers with a handicap allowance of six strokes no longer eligible for the amateur championship, the national association has cut off three-fifths of the field, at one fell swoop, measured by the list of 1913. The formal vote, taken ten days ago, was inevitable since the overflowing entry list for last September title struggle was announced, being immediately predicted in this column. The edict will prove the toughest blow that players of waning ability have ever received, but it had to come, although five years ago such proclamation would have seemed out of the question. Of course, many of the six-stroke men will pull themselves into the five-stroke class. As it will be far harder, however, to climb from six to five than it was from seven to six, it looks as if five strokes would remain safe for several seasons to come. Who will be relegated into outer darkness by the change? The knife seems to have fallen most heavily upon players who only a few years ago were college stars. Former Princetonians include William T. West, Howard Gee, Chester Griswold and Dudley Barrows; Harvardites are Walter Egan, Edw. Clark, 3d, and McKim Hollns, and Yalensians: P. H. Jennings and Wyle Carhart, while from Williams is to be noted Clifford Dunning. The national title holders for the first three years in this country are swept away in the persons of Charles B. MacDonald and Herbert J. Whigham. Buffalo's long-time dependency, Parke Wright, is among the lost, along with Sherrill Sherman, Utica. Such war horses from Philadelphia are included as Hugh Willoughby, H. P. Smith, Abbott Collins, H. M. Forrest, Rodney Griscom, Robert Weir, George C. Thomas, Jr., H. H. Francine, W. Ernest Shackelford and George C. Klauer. Among the Bostonians carried down stream are George F. Willett, "Tom" Stevenson, Hugo Johnston, Charles L. Becker, H. P. Farrington and John B. Hyman, while some New Yorkers are James A. Tyng, Ernest Thomson, William L. Hicks, Louis A. Hamilton, W. B. Bremner, Charles H. Brown, Ralph Carroll, Donald Carr, Eugene Conklyn, Merrill Waters, "Jim" Foot, Layton de Forest, Devereux Emmet, Lloyd Gwyer, P. W. Kendall, W. Lester Glennig, Howard Giffen, H. C. Richard, Fred S. Wheeler, Howard Whitney, Oscar Woodward, William R. Simons, A. D. Swords, Albert C. Travis, Frank C. Jennings, W. R. Thurston, Harold Sands, R. D. Lapham, "Arden" Robbins, E. P. Rogers, J. J. Radel, U. A. Murdock, Maurice Malloy, Lee Maxwell, Marc Michael, Louis P. Myers, D. H. McAlpin, 2d, and Charlie O'Connor. The Washington mourners include Dr. Lee Marlan, W. S. Harlan and Allan Lord; the St. Louisians: Ralph McKettrick; the Baltimoreans; Oliver Perin and Cecil Calvert; the Pittsburghers: J. F. Byers and the Chicagoans: John M. Sellers. No pun is intended in putting the market men—Byers and Sellers, so near together. Such youngsters as Lynn Johnson, Chicago; Stewart Connolly, New York, and Reggie Lewis, Connecticut, also in the list, will be able to rehabilitate themselves, but probably not more than one man in four can regain the ground thus lost. What weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth there will be in private chambers when the new situation is comprehended. The stream of time is bearing us all along at the same pace, though it may not always seem so. If you are seeking consolation, reading a few chapters of Gulliver's Travels will do perhaps more good than any other prescription.

Here is a bit of a Thanksgiving tale with golfing flavor that is appropriate to the holidays. The Glenwood Club, of Long Island, largely made up of members of the Crescent Athletic Club, of New York, offered a turkey as a Thanksgiving handicap prize. Lo and behold it was won by a bachelor. One of the benedicts thereat began to weep over his hopeless score, so the bachelor generously turned over the bird to the married mourner. The latter, not to be outdone, invited the bachelor to the feast, along with other contestants, until the board looked like a club barbecue. To preserve the unities it had been agreed that the host should figure as the real winner of the fowl, but, alas, one diner, who had not been let into the secret, gave the whole affair away broadcast in an unguarded moment. With so many fair guests at the table, too, the bachelor felt fully as flustered as the host.

While it seems to the average player that Walter J. Travis has taken too much to heart the retention of foursomes in the annual tri-State matches, even going so far as to keep out of the contest the last two seasons, it cannot be denied that the weight of opinion is steadily shifting in favor of four-ball matches. The matter has been brought to notice again by recent editorial remarks of Harold Hilton, who lately took the helm of Golf Illustrated. He says the introduction of foursomes, two years ago, has had the effect of almost killing the international team match between England and Scotland. Of course, Travis wasn't

going to let slip an opportunity like that to ride his pet hobby, so he quotes Hilton in the last issue of the American Golfer and comments on the significance of such outcome, in the native lair of the foursome. At the last vote taken it was about half and half as to foursomes and four-ball matches between Philadelphia, New York and Boston. If memory is not at fault, the Quakers, along with the Pittsburghers, strongly preferred four balls, New York was about equally divided and Boston almost unanimous for foursomes. The Hub is not likely to speedily change its attitude, for pro-English ideas are more deeply rooted in the modern Athens than any other district, and, having won hands down last fall, will naturally be inclined to let well enough alone. The Metropolitan team received such a pummeling last fall that its members will be receptive to argument, and it is a safe prediction that eventually the Metropolitans will join hands with Pennsylvanians and out-vote the Massachusetts players two to one. Unfortunately from the way Travis approached the subject, an outsider would think there was only one side to the question. That several arguments could be brought forward in favor of foursomes was shown by those who ranged themselves against Travis, more probably for the sake of "knocking" the veteran than because of decided preference either way. What a pity that personal squabbles should be brought into such a case. In the near future, for the benefit of those who must read as they run, I will try to summarize the opinions on each side, which lacked brevity in their expression.

The editor of the American Golfer further says that signs are not lacking of decay in interest over the Lesley Cup competition, but he makes the blunder of attributing it wholly to the retention of foursomes. Interest in the fixture for a couple of years past has not been nearly as well sustained as in the women's annual tri-city battle. A leading reason is the inconvenient date taken at the end of the busiest and most important month in the year, where it is crowded in like a baby between two fat women in a street car. The October date should never have been shifted. It would not have been, but for John Reed, Jr., lately out of college and fuller of theories than the average dog is of fleas. Being the elder son of the "father of American golf," he probably felt it devolved upon him to propose something and the falling autumn leaves got upon his nerves. Why not have the affair set ahead a month, before the leaves had a chance to demonstrate the law of gravitation. That would at least forestall Nature. Enough sided with him to have the date shifted. Going back to October would be best for all concerned.

Old influences and ancient traditions in the sport are going by the board, on the other side, with a speed and certainty that can scarcely be believed in this country. The change is nothing short of a revolution that will within a few seasons, at most, undermine the Rules Committee of St. Andrews and place the accepted control in the hands of a more popular, up-to-date body that will rejuvenate golf the world over. Exactly the same forces are in operation on both sides of the ocean, Britishers, of the two being the more responsive today. Most Americans are unable to comprehend that fact, because of the stolidness abroad until recently. It is because of such rejuvenation that the introduction of foursomes into the English Scottish team match has almost ended that deeply rooted classic.

For a long time golf and billiards seemed to be incompatible, though many stars of the green table have, from the earliest days, been students of the royal and ancient sport. The past season, however, the tide seems to have turned. J. B. Crookston, billiardist, was runner-up in the Western Pennsylvania amateur championship, after being second in the qualifying round. Wilson P. Foss, of New York, tied for a leading prize in the seniors' famous annual handicap at Apawamis and then won on the playoff. George G. Baxter, former Brooklyn borough golf champion, long excelled in certain phases of billiards and but for lack of time might have demonstrated that the two recreations, after all, are not like oil and water, when it comes to combination.