

It Happened in Golfland

BY VERDANT GREENE

IT IS A wonder that the decision of the Women's Western Association to bar from all tournaments players requiring more than twenty-four strokes' allowance has not occasioned comment by Eastern papers, for it is the most drastic action ever taken regarding golf in this country. In the East it would give promise of discouraging new blood, but in the West it may possibly be different. It is the West that is eternally talking about a free field. To be sure, a woman "duly" is a being so fearfully and wonderfully made that in theory, at least, she should never have been allowed to start. Nevertheless, drawing the line outside of championships is establishing a dangerous precedent. Consequently the innovation will be watched intently everywhere, particularly in these days of militant suffragetteism.

Speaking of Eve's daughters, the Ladies' Golf Union and the National County Alliance of England have finally pooled their issues and agreed to hereafter manage jointly the British Women's championship. Arguing entirely from the success that has attended the efforts of the English women, there are a few American players anxious to have their championship wholly under petticoat auspices. Something can be said on both sides of the question. Generally speaking, women in this country have not been highly successful in running their sectional events, although they have eventually outridden the storms that frequently threatened to swamp them. On the other hand, if it is entirely wrong that they should not be given representation, although it ought to be added that they have never demanded such voice. The national body would undoubtedly be only too glad to lay down most of its responsibilities in that direction. In an advisory capacity it could furnish service that the women would otherwise be unable to secure.

In all the last decade there has been but one instance in which the women rebelled over the men's dictum. That was in 1905 when their national was awarded to Washington, instead of Philadelphia. Several married women sent word through their husbands that they would not stir a step unless Philadelphia was chosen and several of the lubbers who had been thoroughly coached before leaving home grew red in the face through their earnestness in urging the Quaker City's claim. One or two of them gave evidence of being afraid to confront the "missus" upon returning home unless the verdict agreed with her wishes. Hard names were narrowly avoided. Philadelphia finally lost. The New York women kept their word, only two of them teeing up at Chevy Chase, but the Philadelphians showed a better spirit by raising the usual delegation. By rotation the women's national should have gone West this year instead of to Long Island, but the widespread Eastern aversion to the long trip was taken into account, although the vote was scarcely fair to the Chicagoans.

What are women's rights in sports, anyway? Not long ago at a White Mountain summer resort a New York woman entered a tournament designedly for men; her entry was accepted on the supposition that she would be eliminated in

the qualifying round. Much to the chagrin of the committee, she returned a score surpassed only by a handful of contestants. Why should not a woman be permitted to enter any competition on even terms against men, if she wishes? The difficulty of adjusting handicaps between men and women might render it inadvisable to admit both sexes in an allowance competition, but the only obvious reason for separating them at scratch is that women, as a rule, would be outclassed, or for precisely the same reason that boxers are divided into classes according to weight. However, if a boxer of a given weight chooses to take his chances against heavier men, he is perfectly at liberty to do so. Therefore, why should not the same principle apply where women are concerned? It would certainly not be fair to force women to play on even terms with men, but there is no obvious injustice to men in allowing them to do so. Several women could be mentioned almost sure to win in an open competition against any men they would be likely to encounter at resorts, to which the more expert players are seldom attracted.

Should the eternal feminine be barred to spare the feelings of those men who would feel humiliated at being surpassed by a woman, or because of the fear that championship lists would be unduly inflated by a throng of inferior women players, anxious to test their skill against men? If the first, it is unsportsmanlike, if the second, it is a far-fetched assumption, for it is not probable that any woman would desire to play against men until she had gained extraordinary rating among her own sex. If a woman should arise so uncommonly good at any game, that she equaled or surpassed its foremost male exponent, what an absurdity it would be to bar her from contests. As it is, there are many tennis and golf tournaments in which players like Mrs. Bundy and Mrs. Stout would be much more in their class among men than among women.

The only reasonable argument for barring women would be that it would, in fact, be unfair to the men, on the ground that the instinctive chivalry in most of them acts as an inhibition, consciously or unconsciously, upon their ability to do their best against a woman opponent, or on the other hand that it would tend to kill the spirit of courtesy. Some advanced women might be mean enough to insinuate that the average man's self-esteem and the reluctance to admit his inferiority to any woman in anything, might have something to do with the case.

The Royal and Ancient in this country, until a comparatively recent date, has been a luxury, whereas, in England, it has long been a necessity. Can anyone doubt that it is rapidly approaching the point of being a necessity here? One does not have to be a student in economics to realize that fancy articles are always more or less costly, while staples seldom command more than a narrow profit. If some of the effort that has always been expended in attempting to keep membership lists exclusive had been diverted toward improving property and advancing common needs, many clubs would be today in less precarious circumstances. Now, however, the sport is slowly but steadily coming within the reach of the American masses. A Londoner recently in the States said:

"I believe if club dues and fees were not so exorbitant, the Scotch game would give baseball a race for popularity in the States. I belong to several clubs in and near London. Their courses are as good, if not better than the average American links, yet the dues in none of them exceed \$10 a year. There is no reason why golf should be a rich man's game. It ought to be every man's game, as it is in England and Scotland."

There was buried last week, in New York, a golfer, aged 50, whose death was caused by sarcoma of the clavical bone, an uncommon disease which he contracted in a way never before known in this country. The victim slipped, last summer, as he was making a powerful drive and turned a complete somersault, landing heavily. Within a few hours he began to feel severe pains in his right shoulder. Physicians made him keep hot cloths on his shoulder and lung for several days. Finally he was declared to have tuberculosis and he was sent to the Adirondacks, where he finally became so weak he couldn't move without help. He inherited no lung weakness.

Commissioners of public courses everywhere should follow the example of Buffalo officials in making the greens of Delaware Park stand as an object lesson in turf growing to the average resident and visitor. Not all municipal links, to be sure, are so advantageously situated for coaxing the long green, but all could approximate the Bison results.

In view of the mention lately made in this column of the unique reinstatement as an amateur of Alexander Findlay, of Philadelphia, it is worth while noting that the New Zealand Association is about to put forward a proposal as to the return of several professionals to amateur standing. Action is expected in time to render several men eligible for the amateur championship at Sandwich

in May. If the plan goes through, several professionals in this country have designs in the same direction.

The paragraph in this column a few weeks ago regarding girl caddies has caused a Connecticut golfer to wax reminiscent. He writes among other things: "Those girls at Wee Burn, in order to avoid discussion as to whether or not their hats were on straight, wore no hats. One player had a long hunt to find his club bearer, finally discovering her almost under his nose. It turned out that at noon she slipped home and changed her gown for another that better suited her complexion. I remember the year Dr. Carl Martin, who once held the Nutmeg title, proved the runner-up at Wee Burn. It is to be feared the good doctor led his choir next day at Greenwich in the doxology with less fervor than would otherwise have been the case."

There unquestionably is a capital chance for American players to "clear up," so to speak, at the championship on the course of the Royal Ottawa Club, late in June, to which Americans have been especially bidden. The courtesy ought to be appreciated, but it is doubtful if it will be, considering history. Eight years ago A. E. Austin, of Toronto, in behalf of the Lambton Club, of that city, induced a sizable party of Americans to compete there and it was expected that thereafter visits across the border would be frequent. Nothing of the sort developed, however. Two or three Dominion players occasionally pop up at tournaments on this side, but the presence of an American golfer in a Canadian fixture, barring possibly a Buffaloan at Toronto, is so rare as to occasion remark, although States golfers would stand excellent chances among the rank and file of Canadians. Both sides would gain by more inter-visiting.

All sort of influence is being exerted to induce the Massachusetts Association to do the graceful in voting to return to four-ball matches for the Lesley Cup competition, in view of the fact that the Metropolitan and Philadelphia Association consented to a change in the opposite direction, several years ago, more through courtesy than because of conviction. However, the Ifab, which is far more conventionally English in its views than any other district, will never consent to flip so long as it has the Quaker City trophy in its possession. It is a waste of time to talk of a change so long as victory is perched upon the banner of modern Athens.