

George Voigt's Bid for the British Championship.

New York Golfer's Romantic Career.

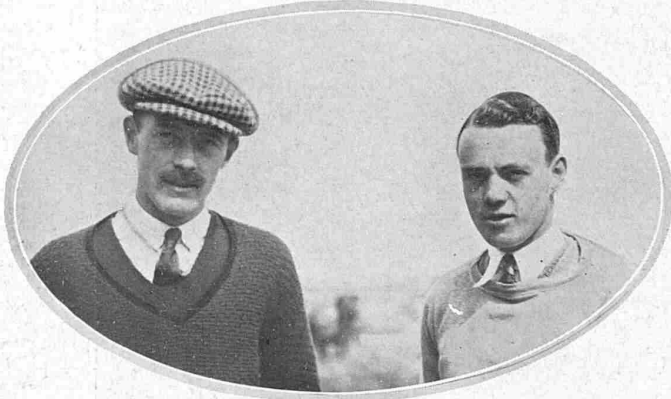
BY A ROVING PLAYER.

GEORGE VOIGT'S presence as a competitor in the British Amateur championship at Westward Ho! on the 18th has turned what threatened to be a purely domestic event into one of international importance. Having got possession of the title, America, apparently, has no intention of relaxing her hold, and on this occasion the famous New York golfer is to attempt the task which Bobby Jones carried through with success at St. Andrews a year ago.

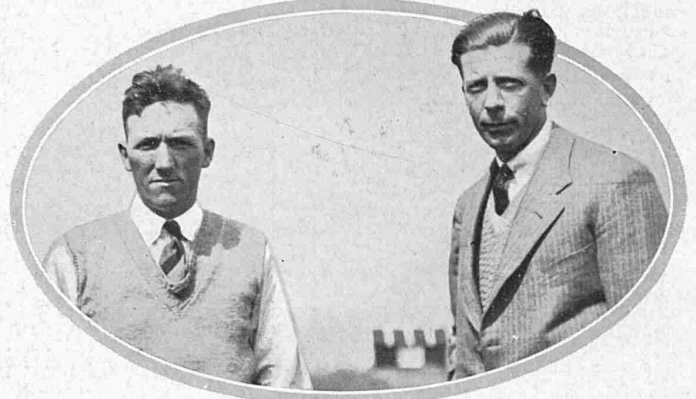
act of addressing the ball for his drive, an official stepped on to the tee and delayed the proceedings until the crowd surging down the fairway had been shepherded into something resembling order. The delay was Voigt's undoing; he had wished to drive over the heads of the spectators, taking pot-luck as to the fate of the shot. He could not have gone far wrong, for the safe line to the hole is away to the left, with the second shot skirting the outlying

beyond—out of bounds. The process of disintegration had set in, and, losing another hole, Voigt's grip of his illustrious opponent had loosened.

But what explanation is there to offer of Voigt's astonishing effort on the last green? Left with a simple putt of three feet to save his neck, Voigt, to use a colloquialism, was never within "a mile" of the hole. I can offer no explanation other than that Voigt played the last



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Voigt is a dangerous fellow—indeed, it is not stretching it too far to say that in the absence of Jones at St. Andrews, Voigt would now be British champion. It was Jones who, in the final stages, crossed his path, and shattered a dream which seemed on the point of realisation. How Voigt came to lose the match, one of the most thrilling in the annals of modern golf, is one of those mysteries which will never be satisfactorily solved. The only explanation I can offer is that Voigt, becoming bewildered with the prospects of a wonderful victory, suddenly collapsed like a house of cards.

Voigt had come to St. Andrews from Sandwich, where in the Walker Cup match he had gained the biggest triumph of all, defeating Sir Ernest Holderness by the crushing margin of 10 and 8. In the championship Voigt swept all opposition aside until the semi-final. Here he met Jones, who was under no delusions as to the nature of the task confronting him. It was one demanding all his skill and all his powers of concentration, and though Jones called up all his reserves, he found himself in the terrible predicament of two down with the last five holes to play.

In this short stretch it seemed impossible that he could pierce the defences of one of the shrewdest and most imperturbable golfers who ever stepped on to a links. Yet the miracle happened. I shall always maintain that Voigt lost the championship at the fourteenth, a hole made notorious because of its association with the line of uncompromising hazards known as "Hell Bunker," and its evil ally, the "Devil's Kitchen." The story of the fourteenth hole in this ever-memorable encounter, never having been fully told, may be of interest now that Voigt is about to attempt something which only three Americans—Walter Travis, Jess Sweetser and Jones—have so far accomplished.

It may seem a trivial incident, but the circumstances point inevitably to the conclusion that somewhere in Voigt's armour there is a weak spot, one that is open to attack. As he was in the

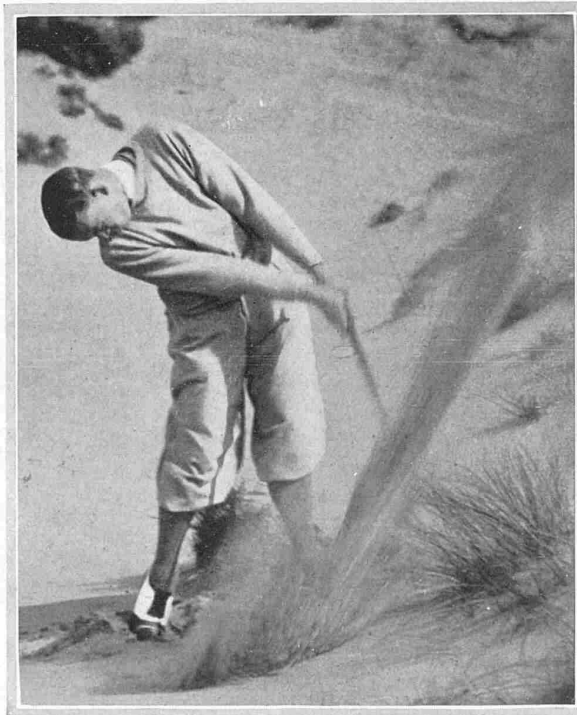
fringes of "Hell." When at last Voigt re-addressed the ball for the drive, he shifted his stance a couple of points to the right, a dangerous adjustment, because he courted disaster from a sliced shot. What I suspected, and what Jones himself suspected would probably happen, did actually occur: Voigt's drive, hit off the heel of the club, sailed over the low stone wall into the Elysian Fields

five holes with his mind in a whirl, a state of things brought about by the sudden snap in his efforts at concentration caused by the delay on the fourteenth tee. It is an explanation, perhaps not wholly convincing, which Voigt himself puts forward.

"When I came to address the ball for the second time," he says, "I had forgotten the safe route to the left, and altering the line of direction, aimed for the narrow plateau straight down the course, which would have given me an easy shot over 'Hell.' The alteration proved fatal." This is the man who is to be the chief, if not the sole, representative of America at Westward Ho! Voigt will not be bothered and worried by hordes of spectators on the Royal North Devon links, though his presence will certainly arouse additional interest in a championship for which he will start favourite.

Voigt's career as a golfer has been a romantic one. From a caddie he has risen to the position of a Wall Street bond-broker, and at the age of 34 he becomes, with Jones and Von Elm out of the way, America's foremost amateur golfer. There is a professional touch about his methods, the chief of which are clean, crisp and decisive hitting of the ball. He has been styled "America's straightest driver," a description applied to him after two seasons of intensive golf, during which, it was declared, he was never once off the course from the tee. While this is difficult to believe, I do know that, as the result of a month's close acquaintance, during his visit here last year, Voigt may be regarded as one of the most accurate hitters of the ball in the amateur ranks.

Voigt is a lean, rather cadaverous-looking man, of medium height, and with deep, sunken eyes. All bone and muscle, he possesses a pair of hands and wrists which respond to every movement, like pieces of fine-tempered steel, the clubhead swishing through the ball with the sound of escaping steam. His two greatest rivals having chosen to secede, Voigt is seizing the chance to become world-famous.



IN A SAHARA OF SAND: E. R. TIPPLE (LANGLEY PARK) IN THE SEMI-FINAL OF THE ENGLISH CLOSE AMATEUR GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP AT HUNSTANTON, WHEN HE LOST TO L. G. CRAWLEY (THE FINAL WINNER) AT THE 20TH HOLE.

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