



# THE GOLFER

PRESUMABLY the professional golfer is now definitely so much better than the amateur that a mixed tournament such as that which was held at Sandwich in 1894 would provide very little amusement. On that occasion sixteen players took part, eight professionals being chosen by old Tom Morris and Charlie Hunter, and eight amateurs by the Committee of the St. George's Club. The result was a victory for Douglas Rolland, but only after he had beaten Mr. Tait in the semi-final round at the 20th hole. Mr. John Ball was beaten somewhat easily in the round before by J. H. Taylor, and neither Mr. Hilton, Mr. Mure Fergusson, nor Mr. Horace Hutchinson survived a round. Douglas Rolland was in those days professional at Limpfield, but he moved in the next year to the Young Rye course. Whether or not he was ever actually the best player in the world, and he most certainly was not far from being so. Douglas Rolland's position in the affection of those who regard golf as a cheerful game is unique. Never was there a player with possibilities of such immense grandeur, nor one associated with quite so freakish a

foursome. After a period spent abroad he died in 1914, and his position as the "showman" of the world of golf has never been adequately filled since. Perhaps Mr. Cyril Tolley is the nearest approach we have had, but he has never allowed himself to develop quite the eccentricities of Douglas Rolland.

Unless you see with your own eyes the actual incident, it is never quite safe to form a definite opinion on any reported discussion on the rules as affecting that incident, but the Boys' Championship at Dunbar last week does seem to have made its name by one astounding interpretation of Rule 20. Mitchell, of Sandwich, who won the tournament last year, during the course of his game against a boy called Ramsden, played with the wrong ball, and as Ramsden notified the fact to the referee, Mitchell then and there lost the hole. The position was confused, however, by the referee, whether older or younger than the competitors it is not stated, ordering Ramsden to play Mitchell's ball, and so level affairs in a nice friendly way. Mitchell actually won this hole played in this curious manner,



ON THE NORTH BERWICK COURSE: SHOWING SIR EWEN MACLEAN, SIR CHARLES DOBELL, AND MR. NORMAN RAEBURN.



AT NORTH BERWICK: LORD CASTLEROSSE.

talent. Like many other notabilities he was born in the kingdom of Fife, in 1860, and as a young man was a mason by trade, an occupation which seems to have suited him well, for when he was at his zenith as a golfer he stood over 6 feet high and weighed over 13 stones. His first act of impertinence was, when still playing as an amateur, to beat Mr. John Ball in a home and home match over Earlsferry and Hoylake by thirteen holes. He became professional in 1884, and settled down to a glorious career as an exhibition and prize match player, and general golfing entertainer. Being employed in England he could not spare the time to take part in the open championship when it was decided in Scotland, but, in 1894 he was second

to Taylor in the championship at Sandwich, having a few days before beaten Willie Park, of Musselburgh, in a 36 hole match for £50 a side by 3 and 2. Douglas Rolland was considered to be the longest driver of his day, though there was little to choose between him and Mr. Tait and Mr. Edward Blackwell. Wherever he played he is still credited with astonishing feats, some of them by now generously embroidered, but some of the stories told about him will live in the memory for ever, for they do not always bear repeating. He is always said, and I believe quite rightly, to have been able to play equally well with any clubs which came to hand first, for when he went away to play in an exhibition match he considered it an unnecessary hindrance to drag his own clubs about, or even to see that he had nails in his shoes, or a jacket in which he could swing freely. You are still shown, or can be if you want to be, the remarkable shots and *tours de force* accomplished by Rolland at Rye during the short time that he was professional there. He had a gift for playing his very best strokes from the most hideous places imaginable, and with apparently the most unsuitable club, a penchant that made him an ideal member of a sociable

but Ramsden nevertheless won the match by one hole. Had the matter been left at that the equity of the case would not have been outraged. But "the Committee"—again I plead guilty to be ignorant as to whether it was the Committee of the Club or the "Boys' Championship Committee," and if the latter whether they were infants or full-grown men—decided that the match should be replayed. The unfortunate Ramsden, who had committed no crime to deprive him of his perfectly lawful victory, was beaten in this second game, and must be accounted one of the unluckiest boys of the year. The whole affair was of course farcical, and the sad thing is that we shall have to wait another whole year for such another joke.

Whatever Mitchell may have done and Ramsden may not have done, nothing can detract from the virtue of young Mathieson's ultimate success in the tournament. He has now won this event twice in three years, and has clearly proved himself to be the best of those boys who have sought the championship. Whether he be the best of his age in the country cannot be known, for it is an event that has not yet attracted a truly representative entry, in that only a comparatively few boys are allowed by their parents to attempt the ridiculous. Judged by the accounts of the play there is nothing to show that any of the boys were in anything approaching the class that was set by Mr. John Ball, Mr. Hilton, Mr. F. G. Tait, James Braid, or John Henry Taylor when they were of the same age. It can only be hoped that, in spite of the comic relief of referee and committee, experience will in some way benefit those who took part in the tournament. This filling up schoolboys' holidays with competitive sport can easily be overdone. What with golf, cricket, and Rugby football matches to which public attention is called, "holidays" may well come to be only an exchange of one kind of work for another.



AT NORTH BERWICK: LORD KINROSS.