

A GOLFING SUR- PRISE.

DEFEAT OF THE GREAT MASTERS.

AMERICANS AT HOYLAKE.

(BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

The real masters of British professional golf have just received their greatest set-back. In a tournament for the largest sum ever offered—£1,000—the biggest share has gone to a comparatively unknown man, A. E. Hallam, of Manchester. The second, third, fourth, and fifth places were also occupied by golfers outside the magic circle. Duncan, the open champion, came sixth, if you please, and his share of the spoils would hardly compensate him for five expensive days spent in the North of England. Hallam's victory came as a complete surprise. He astonished himself; he certainly astonished me, and he has created mild wonderment in golfing circles generally.

Hallam is not a golfer who impresses you. It would not be too much to say that at the beginning of this fight for £1,000 the odds against him would have been at least 50 to 1. And I could have imagined a rush to lay the odds, and certain timidity in accepting them. Hallam is a short, stocky man, who plays the game pleasantly and not too fiercely. He is not a long hitter, but he has cultivated the trick, or art, I should say, of adding to his length by playing his tee and iron shots with a touch of draw. But his real strength as a golfer lies in his devilishly accurate work on the green. He uses a small, light putting cleft, and wherever the ball may be on the green you can wager that the approach putt will be near the hole. As a holer-out of the four, five, and six feet putts he must be a most desirable partner in a foursome; as an opponent he must be the most exasperating person alive. None of these putts did I see him miss, but I did see him make a tragic attempt to hole his last putt of less than two feet on the last green. All when the fate of several hundreds of pounds hung in the balance. He had the putt to lead the field by two strokes.

DEFYING THE GIANTS.

It was probably the greatest moment in Hallam's life. He, the lowly, obscure golfer had defied the giants, and, like many another man who has climbed to the giddy heights, had become frightened of himself. With trembling hands he took the putter and some person, evidently not acquainted with human psychology, exclaimed to Arnaud Massey, who, with many hundreds of others were standing on the edge of the green, "Oh, he cannot possibly miss that." Massey, the experienced golfer, who has been placed in many a similar position, observed "Can't he! Just wait until the ball is in the hole." He was right; Hallam, a prey to a thousand fears, missed the putt by the length of a lead pencil.

MR. "BOBBIE" JONES.

Of perhaps deeper interest to British golfers has been the arrival of the American amateurs. I spent two days at Hoylake seeing their play and observing their styles and methods. I came away deeply impressed. That these United States golfers are a great power admits of no possible question. They have established their headquarters at Hoylake, and mean to play one and sometime two rounds a day until the opening of the championship tomorrow week. By that time they will have become thoroughly acquainted with the intricacies of the Cheshire links. Wonderful stories have reached this country of the exceptional ability of Mr. "Bobbie" Jones, the boy prodigy. I have seen Mr. Jones, who is just nineteen years of age, and I can only endorse what Vardon says of him, that he is perhaps one of the very few amateur golfers of the world who hits the ball like a professional. He is the most confident young man of his age I have ever met; he is brimming over with vitality and enthusiasm. There are several noticeable features about his game. First and foremost are the address and the immobility of his head. There is absolutely no nonsense about his method. The clubhead is placed to the ball without any preliminary waggle at all, and before you realise what has happened the ball has gone. The quietness and the alarming suddenness of it all are positively startling.

Now we come to the head. When the club is brought to the ball the human head is turned away to the right with the eyes looking straight down and gazing fixedly at the back of the ball. Not until the ball is well on its way is the head moved, but it is not jerked up. It moves slowly from right to left and, most important of all, always in the same plane. This, I believe, explains the secret of Mr. Jones's golf, much in the same way as a precisely similar method helped J. H. Taylor to mount to the topmost rung of the ladder of fame. Mr. Jones hits the ball very hard, with a good, rhythmical swing, which is not in the least exaggerated. In comparison with English golfers he stands rather close to the ball, especially when playing the iron and mashie shots. The ball is punched into the air, and distance is regulated purely by the length of the back swing.