FORM IN GOLF.

By Harry Vardon.

I HAVE never before written, or had published, any matter regarding my ideas of playing golf; and I will commence by contradicting the statement so universally made by people when speaking or writing about me, that I "infringe every known rule laid down in the books and play a game which is peculiar to myself." The only peculiarity about the way I play is in the manner in which I hold my clubs, and this I will endeavor to explain, with the aid of the accompanying illustrations from life.

I grasp the club about two inches from the top, and I always play with very short clubs, my driver being only forty inches long, measured from the top of the shaft to the heel of the head; my brassey is the same length, my idea being that I have better control over a short club than over a longer one.

I place my left thumb along the center of the shaft and completely cover it with the palm of the right hand, the little finger of my right hand overlapping the knuckle of the first finger of my left hand, the end of the little finger being half way between the knuckle and the second joint of the first finger of the left hand.

I neither hold my club in the palms of my hands nor in the fingers; the shaft lies across my right hand and rests between the palm and the fingers of the left hand, and I grasp the club equally tightly with both hands. I use the word tightly because I mean tight, and do not mean to convey the idea that I merely hold the club firmly.

My idea in holding the club as I do, is that I, to all intents and purposes, make the two hands into one and consequently only have to consider the swing of one arm instead of two.

I adopted this grip after trying all kinds of methods of holding clubs, some seven years ago; and not until then did I feel the perfect confidence in myself which is absolutely indispensable to a proper control over the ball and the consequent control over direction.

I ought to add that I put my right thumb on the left-hand side of the center of the shaft when driving, and straight down the center of the shaft for all kinds of iron shots. I never allow my club to move in my hand after addressing the ball until I have completed my stroke.

I carry the club for a full swing back behind my shoulders, almost parallel with the ground, my two hands a little above the top of the shoulder, about on a level with my jaw, and the point of the elbow almost squared a very little above the level of my hands, probably an inch, or possibly two.

I come down much straighter than men who carry their clubs further back and I stand very much more upright; my club thus describes a truer arc from the top of the swing to the end of the follow through than if I described a wider circle.

A great deal has been said in the papers about my method of approaching. It is perfectly true that I always run a ball in preference to pitching it, if the nature of the ground permits; as it is very much easier to simply have to calculate the amount of strength to put
behind a ball to roll it a certain distance than to have to gauge the strength required to pitch a given distance and allow for the roll after, especially as it is very frequently impossible to tell whether you are going to pitch on an exceptionally soft spot or vice versa.

I consider putting, next to the mashie approach, the most important stroke in golf. I always carry two different kinds of putters and I have several different stances, and if I find I am off with one putter I try the other and keep altering my stance until I feel perfectly comfortable; for without this feeling you can not have confidence, and without confidence good and accurate putting is an impossibility.

The expression "a wrist shot" is to me an absurdity; there is no such thing as a wrist stroke alone. In all my so-called wrist shots I make the arms and the wrists act together, but I do not turn my wrists back. My left arm is almost straight, and my right elbow is close to my side and my right forearm is held stiff. It amuses me very much to hear people remark when I place an approach shot close to the hole, "Goodness gracious, what a cut he did put on the ball! He must have drawn his club clean across the ball to make it stop so dead." Now as a matter of fact, I do not put any cut on the ball with my club; but instead of striking the ground about half an inch behind the ball and pitching it straight up, I strike the ball itself almost on the side, a little above the center, and drive it into the ground, from which it ricochets. The ground puts the cut on which stops the ball, and not the club.

I believe I am the only man who makes this stroke, and it is another of the instances in which I am supposed to infringe the rules of golf as laid down in the books.

Newspaper critics always say that it is my second shot which wins me the championship. This I believe myself to be perfectly true, and I will endeavor to describe how it is that I make it. The most important point, which results in long accurate playing, is the keeping perfect time between the raising of the club, after addressing the ball, to the top of the swing, and the raising of the left heel over the left toe as it pivots around. These two motions should take place simultaneously; and the downward swing and the return of the left foot to the exact position it was in when the upward swing commenced should also be simultaneous. At the precise moment when the left heel reaches the ground and the club head strikes the ball, the
through until your toe reaches that point, you check your swing and lose distance.

In regard to my method of training, or rather, to my lack of training, I have what seems to me to be common-sense reasons for acting as I do. I am naturally a healthy man, with a good appetite, and I live about the same all the year round; I always drink whenever I feel like it, but never to excess, and I am an inveterate smoker. This mode of living, combined with an outdoor life, keeps me in perfect health, and I consider that my normal condition is the one in which I am the most likely to play my best; my nerves are not irritated either by extra abstinence or by any sudden excesses, and I feel no more excitement when entering for a big match than I do when playing a mixed foursome, which, after all said and done, I consider the most pleasant way of enjoying a game of golf.

VARDON AND HIS IDEAS.

By Charles S. Cox.

IN writing about Harry Vardon and his style of playing golf, a most important point in my opinion is the man's temperament.

He is naturally very quiet and unassuming in his manner and gives you the idea of being phlegmatic and not much given either to study or thought; but underneath his outward appearance of "don't care much about anything" lie a very shrewd head and a bundle of nerves, which supply him with an inexhaustible fund of vitality, directly he is interested in anything.

The shrewd, common-sense style of analysis which he brings to bear upon subjects about which he knows absolutely nothing, invariably leads him in the right direction, and he seems to get to the very bottom of whatever he attempts to do or to talk about. If he had not been a golf player he would probably have been a great man in any other line of business requiring a good eye, perfect control over the nerves, and the faculty of accomplishing anything by the power of deduction.

He is supposed to infringe every known rule laid down by the best writers on golf, such as Horace Hutchinson, Simpson, and Park. As a matter of fact, I do not think he does anything of the kind; he simply supplies the missing links to the chain which they attempt to make when describing their ideas of what constitutes a perfect style when playing.

They give an idea of a swing, which no doubt is mathematically correct, but as there are no two men made alike, their ideal swing is one which very few men can adapt to their varied styles of physique.

I have heard it frequently stated by men who have seen Vardon play since he came over here, that he drives with a three-quarter swing. Now, with a three-quarter swing, the elbow of the right arm is down, and the hands are below the level of the arm-pit, or about on a level with it, and the club is pointing up; while for a full swing the elbow is square on a level with the face, and the hands are about on the same level as the elbow. The general idea of a full swing is, that it is the length of the arc described by the club, which constitutes a full swing. This is not correct. It must depend on the height to which you raise your arms. Whether, when at the top of the swing, you allow your club head to drop until it points to the ground behind you, or whether you keep it about parallel with the ground, as Vardon does, is perfectly immaterial as far as the fullness of the swing is concerned.

The men who describe an arc, which is commonly called a full swing, are the men who hold their clubs loose in the palm of their hands and allow it to drop out of the palm into the hollow of the thumb when at the top of the swing. This is an impossibility when the club is held as Vardon holds it, perfectly tight with both hands; in such case you cannot get your club below the level of a line which is parallel with the ground.

When first Vardon became a professional he always used to grip his club with his thumbs around the shaft, and sometimes he could drive a few
holes and keep direction, but he says himself that he never had any confidence in himself; as after letting his club turn in his hand, at the top of the swing, he never felt sure when he grasped it tight again in the downward swing, just before getting to the ball, that the face of the club was at right angles to the line of direction in which he intended the ball to go.

Vardon gets distance by the tremendous rapidity with which he makes the club travel through the air in the last few feet before the lead reaches the ball, and this he does with his wrists only, which are exceptionally strong. He regularly snaps them, the same as a man does when he plays racquets, and it is this snap of the wrists which enables him to get the tremendous brassey shots for which he is famous.

He has the most sound common-sense ideas of what constitutes a perfect follow through I ever heard; and he has described them so perfectly in his own article that it is not necessary to say anything about them except to add that Taylor himself says that Vardon is the only professional in England or Scotland who has “a perfect follow through.”

Mr. Herbert Leeds, who is a shrewd critic about any sport which he goes in for, remarked at Aiken that at first he thought Vardon seemed to jump at his ball, when playing for distance, but that after observing him more closely, but that after observing him more closely he came to the conclusion that it was simply the way in which his arms and his feet kept perfect time with one another. This is exactly what Vardon himself says. I have seen him play with Smith, the open champion, Findlay, Low, Nicholls, Jones and Machrell; and by comparison with the wide swings they all take around the shoulders, Vardon immediately strikes you as taking a very much more up and down one. This, of course, to a certain extent is due to the very short clubs he uses, which compel him to take a more up and down swing or else crouch very low, which he does not do.

He has the most perfect judgment in regard to distance, and seems to be able to place a ball just about where he thinks it ought to go.

What really counts in his matches is his steadiness. I don’t mean that he never foozles a shot, but his foozles probably don’t average one per cent. Put him on any 18-hole course in the world, and the probabilities are that his score will not vary more than four either way, however long he plays.

I asked several men at Hoylake just recently how they graded the professionals on the other side, and the unanimous reply was that Vardon was one, two, three, four, five, six, then came Herd, Taylor, etc. Willie Park told me that there was only one Vardon, and that he himself could see no one who was likely to beat Vardon for some time to come.

WORKING PLANS FOR THE NEW YORK FOREST PRESERVE.

By Gifford Pinchot,
Chief Forester to the United States.

A PROVISION in the New York State constitution of 1895 is responsible for the thoroughly anomalous situation of the Forest Preserve of New York.

Popular distrust of the management of the State forests culminated in the adoption, first by the constitutional convention and afterward by the people of the State; of a provision which forbade, and which still forbids, the felling, destruction, or removal of any tree on the State Forest Preserve.

This prohibition, adopted purely in the interest of forest protection, is yet fully as effective a bar to practical forestry as it is to destructive lumbering. That it will eventually be removed there is no question, but probably not until, by the preparation and publication of forest-working plans, the public can be assured of what is proposed to do, how that is to be done, and what the result will be both upon the forest and upon the treasury of the State.

A forest-working plan is, briefly, a
A FIRST-CLASS golfer is born, not made, and unless a man possesses certain necessary physical qualifications, no amount of teaching will make him into what he was never intended by nature to be. Given, however, a man with a fair amount of strength, a good eye, limber muscles and an even temper, if he will follow certain rules, which I will suggest to him as having proved very useful to me personally, I see no reason why he should not become a first-class golfer.

In the first place, supposing that he has no previous knowledge of the game, let him go to some good professional and learn from him how to swing a driver—he ought not to be allowed to hit a ball before he has taken at least three lessons in swinging. When he has learned to swing properly, then let him practice driving with a ball. After learning to drive let him then learn how to use a brassey, then his cleek, and so on through the whole bag of clubs. When he feels that he has some knowledge of the various clubs let him go out and practice over two or three holes back and forth, and not until he has learned how and when to use all the different clubs would I allow him to play around the course.

In regard to style, play in whatever style is best adapted to your own physique. The faults of a bad swing can be seen and corrected just as well when occurring in one style of swing as in another, and unless you feel free and easy and comfortable, you will never swing properly. There is one point, however, about which I feel very strongly, and that is. I would urge everyone to play off the right foot, and not off the left. I don't think there is any doubt but that you can play straighter and follow through further and better and consequently get a longer ball off the right foot than is possible off the left. When you are playing, always try to take a little ground with your club; by “taking a little ground” I don't mean dig your club into the turf, but just graze the ground, and you will get a much longer and straighter ball than if you took it perfectly “clean.” When driving take the tee with the ball. When playing any kind of a shot, whether a long brassey through the green, or a mashie pitch, always try and fix upon some spot where you think the ball ought to drop and endeavor to strike as near that spot as you possibly can.

Never pitch a ball on an approach shot, if running it up will do just as well. It is very much easier to gauge the force necessary to run a ball a given distance than it is to calculate the necessary force to give it to pitch around a certain spot and to gauge the amount of run required to land it near the hole after the ball has stricken the ground. Putting is a most important matter in any match, for it is very easy to lose a stroke or two on the putting green, and a missed put counts as much as a topped drive. A good plan is to select some spot which catches your eye in a direct line between your tall and the hole, and endeavor to run our ball over that spot. If your line of direction has been accurate and the ball is hit by the blade of the putter exactly at right angles to the line of direction, you ought to hole your put.

Never try to put cut or twist on your ball with your club, unless there is some very necessary reason for it, such as a stymie by a tree or something of that sort. It is an absolute impossibility in my opinion to get as good direction with a cut on the ball as is obtained by playing the ball straight.

Tee your ball high or low according to whether you intend to carry some bunker at a long distance or whether you intend to get a low ball with lots of run in it. I don’t believe in training for a match. I think a man’s normal condition, always supposing that he is in good health is the state in which he is most apt to do himself the greatest justice, as his nerves are not then upset by any sudden change from his usual manner of living, and he is less liable to be affected by the various accidents which are always occurring during a match.

Do not get discouraged just because you happen to start out poorly. Most matches are not less than eighteen holes, and there is plenty of time to recover from one or two bad holes; always remember
you are not playing against Colonel Bogey, and the other fellows are just as liable as you to be doing as badly as you are before the match is over.

Keep in constant practice, play as often as you can, and don’t be always changing the style of your clubs. When you have discovered by actual playing what models suit you, stick to them until you know them thoroughly, and don’t imagine just because you have seen some man make a wonderful shot with some particular club that, because you go and buy one like it, you can necessarily do equally well. The more you play with the same clubs the better you will use them.

Never underestimate your opponent at match play; always play your very best, for you can never tell when he is liable to make a sudden spurt.

Be temperate. You cannot play golf well and drink hard; sooner or later it will affect your eyes, and your power of judging distance and hitting your ball accurately will be lost.

Finally, I want to again impress on anyone who wishes to become a good golfer the lasting importance of having the arms and feet work together. Unless they do, you can never become a long straight driver. Remember that after addressing the ball with the club head, as the arms go up in the upward swing you pivot on your left foot, your arms and your left foot in perfect time, one with the other, until at the top of the swing you are on the point of your left toe. As the club comes down, the left foot pivots back to its original position when you addressed the ball, and at the moment when the club head strikes the ball the left heel touches the ground. As the club begins to rise for the follow through, you commence to pivot on your right foot, foot and arms moving together in perfect time, until, at the end of the follow through, you are on the toes of the right foot, and the stroke is finished.
When my eldest brother, Robert, invited me to spend the summer of 1897 in the United States—the summer after my graduation from St. Andrews University—I was, of course, delighted to accept, but I had one very important question.

"Do they play golf in the United States?" I asked him. "Should I bring my golf clubs?"

Although I had played the game nearly all of my 21 years and had been fortunate enough to win the St. Andrews Gold Medal in 1895, my brother had been in the United States for some time and had lost touch with the game.

"I believe," he answered, "that some golf is played. I don't know where, but I think you will be able to find a course if you bring your clubs."

That episode, it seems to me, illustrates the difference that 50 years has made in American golf. Half a century ago my brother, in New York, did not know a golfer or a golf course. Today, with 5,000 golf courses and nearly 3,000,000 golfers, the situation seems hardly credible.

After my arrival here, in order to find a course, I went to a sporting goods store, A. G. Spalding & Bros., and found it had a golf department. Charles S. Cox, the manager, talked to me for a time and then introduced me to H. L. Fitzpatrick of the *New York Sun* and Chappie Mayhew of the *New York Herald*, two of the first golf writers.

The next day they took me to the Van Cortlandt Park course, ostensibly to introduce me to my first American golf course but secretly, I suspect, to see if I really could play the game at all. Later I joined the old Fairfield County Golf Club in Greenwich and became an American golfer.

Although it will be 50 years next month since I had the good fortune to win the Amateur Championship, it will be 51 years since I played in my first Amateur Cham-
Fairfield County Players in the Early Days

Seated on the steps of the old Fairfield County Golf Club at Greenwich, Conn., in 1898 are, left to right—rear—Findlay S. Douglas and Charles S. Cox; front—Frank Freeman, Julian W. Curtiss, Ed B. Curtiss, Dr. Carl Martin, James Mason and F. W. Sanger.

In the 1898 Championship, Joe Choate, of Stockbridge, the son of the Ambassador to the Court of St. James, led the stroke round with a score of 175, and the highest qualifying score was 189. I am afraid the scores look rather terrible when placed against Skee Riegel’s 136 at Baltusrol two years ago. But most of us were just weekend golfers 50 years ago and, of course, we used the old gutty ball.

In our defense, I would like to point out that rounds in the low 70s were scored, even by amateurs playing the gutty ball. I know because I scored one myself in the third match-play round against James A. Stillman. After I had won the match, 9 up and 8 to play, we finished out the bye holes so that I could make a new record for the course.

Apart from the scoring, however, qualifying rounds did not change much over the years. In 1898, with 120 players competing for 32 places, there were bound to be upsets, and that year we had one of the biggest ones in the history of the Championship. Jim Whigham, who had won...
the two previous years, failed to qualify in defense of his title. His failure was excusable, however. He had just returned from the Spanish-American War, in which he had been a war correspondent and had contracted a lingering fever.

I was fortunate enough to be very much on my game in that Championship. Although I had saved my summer vacation in order to play, each week-end I had taken the train from New York to Greenwich or some other course, and the regular play enabled me again to hit the ball as I had in my school days at St. Andrews. My opponents, in addition to Jim Stillman, were James F. Curtis, of Essex County, Mass.; A. H. Smith, of Huntingdon Valley, Philadelphia; my perennial rival, Walter J. Travis, of Oakland, New York; and Walter B. Smith, of Chicago, whom I defeated in the final, 5 up and 3 to play.

It seemed to me, however, that the Championship really was won in the semi-final round. Walter Travis and I had first become acquainted in an invitation tournament at Baltusrol the year before. It happened to be his first golf tournament and my first in this country. We were both beaten in the first round, rode back to New York on the train together, quite disgusted with ourselves, and became good friends and frequent rivals thereafter. After I had beaten him at Morris County, I felt sure I could win the Championship the next day.

In that tournament I carried a driver, brassie, spoon, driving iron, midiron, mashie, niblick and a wooden putter. Just eight clubs, which was a normal bagful in those days, although just half the number the professionals were carrying in recent years, until last spring. They seemed sufficient then, and I am not at all sure that they wouldn't be sufficient now. I carry more today, but I noticed after a round at Blind Brook recently that the only clubs I had used were three woods, a No. 2 iron once or twice, a pitching iron, a niblick and a putter.

My clothing also was a bit different in that 1898 Championship. All my life I have had my jackets made with real button-holes on the cuffs. I see no purpose in having buttons without button-holes. And when I played golf, I wore my jacket, unbuttoning the buttons and turning the cuffs back.

The Palm Grip

As did most players then, I used the old-fashioned palm grip: I simply laid the shaft in my fingers, without overlapping or interlocking, and wrapped my palms around it. It was not until Harry Vardon came over here in 1900 and won our Open Championship that any of us heard of the overlapping grip. Vardon had to use it because his hands were so big. He had the biggest hands I've seen, and he had to overlap the little finger of his right hand to get them onto the club compactly.

After Vardon's tour, nearly every American golfer adopted the overlapping grip, but I never did. I still thicken my grips with extra felt and use the palm grip. And although it is unusual now, Eb Byers, in 1906, and Jimmy Johnston, in 1929, also won the Amateur Championship with the same palm grip.

Soon after the turn of the century the golf ball underwent a radical change when the rubber-cored ball was introduced. In winning the 1903 Metropolitan Amateur Championship at Deal, N. J., I used a pneumatic ball—just a shell filled with compressed air.

The golf swings were not at all uniform in 1898. Each player took an individual stance in his quest to achieve balance. Balance, of course, has remained very important in the swing, but it seems to me it was even more important 50 years ago. The gutty ball took a lot of hitting. Two hundred yards was an exceptionally long drive. And without balance, we couldn't achieve any distance worth mentioning.

A full swing, with free pivot and wrist action, were standard, however. The comparatively shorter, compact swing has come into the game quite recently.

The one shot that has changed most in the last 50 years is the bunker shot. Half a century ago, bunkers were not raked and manicured, and the lies were often nearly impossible. We had no sand wedges and had to get the ball out as best we could with a niblick. Whether a player chose
Mr. Douglas with Robert T. Jones, Jr., in 1930, when Mr. Douglas was President of the USGA and Mr. Jones scored his "Grand Slam."

to hit a crude explosion shot or chip the ball cleanly, the stroke was a real test which has now practically disappeared from the game. The sand wedge tends to make all players equal when playing from a bunker.

In many other respects, some for the better and some, I'm afraid, for the worse, the game has changed as it has grown in popularity. But it still remains a game in which skill without sportsmanship is meaningless—and therefore it is still a game.

It is a game which has been good to me. I have been fortunate enough to have played in 15 Amateur Championships from 1897 to 1923 and to have won other championships. And I am most proud not of what I have won but of what I have been able to contribute—three years as President of the Metropolitan Golf Association, two years as President of the United States Golf Association, and four years as President of the United States Seniors' Golf Association.

PROPOSED BRITISH RULES

The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, Scotland, has distributed a draft of proposed revised Rules of Golf to interested parties prior to adoption. The revision, when and if adopted, will be the fifth, previous changes having been made in 1903, 1912, 1920 and 1934.

The policy of the R. and A. Committee, of which Bernard Darwin is chairman, has been to simplify the layout of the Rules and to clarify their interpretation, especially in instances which experience shows to have been most productive of questions, but to leave unaltered those Rules which have stood the test of time. In some cases, decisions have been incorporated in the Rules, so that a good deal of case law will become statute law. In this respect, the revision is similar to those made in the USGA Rules in 1946 and 1947, although the two codes will not be identical.

"Governing bodies at home and overseas were asked if they wished to retain the present 'stymie' rule, and if not, whether they preferred abolition, the adoption of the American rule, or the retention only of what is generally called the 'self-laid stymie,'" Mr. Darwin explains. "The replies showed a slight preponderance in favor of the present Rule.

"Various alterations were suggested, but there was a remarkable lack of unanimity in favor of any particular one. The Committee having therefore received nothing even approaching a definite mandate for change, propose to leave well alone.

"The most important change in layout is a regrouping of the Rules so that those for any point in match or medal play will now be found together... The Etiquette of the Game now precedes the main text of the Rules on the ground that it is a golfer's first duty, even before he reads the Rules, to know the correct procedure on the Course."

Of particular interest to American golfers is the information that the Rule on Number of Clubs to be Carried has been made more definite as to replacement of a club becoming unfit for play; as proposed, it is now practically identical with the USGA 14-club Rule.