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PARK AND THE PAST

GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS OF FATHER AND SON—PRECEPTS AND PRACTICE

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I

SOMETHING seemed to snap when Willie Park left the landing stage and in a somewhat saddened mood walked along the gangway to the deck of the steamship that was to bear him across the Atlantic, there to remain. Willie is a man of the best human emotions, which are also the simplest, and he loved the land of his birth, felt all manner of ties holding him to it, but fortune for long years past had been unkind, and at last he realized that for the second time a member of his distinguished golfing family must go across the seas to seek the fortune his native land would not yield to him. I think I can imagine many of his thoughts as he saw the shores of Britain receding beyond the wake of the great liner. He thought of the glories that were gone, of "old Willie," the splendid "old Willie" who was his father and one of the greatest golfers of all time, he thought of their beloved Musselburgh, once such a veritable shrine of the game than which not even St. Andrews was more exalted, and perhaps he thought of later days, of London and Huntercombe; but the first memories were the best. That which seemed to snap was almost the only solid link remaining between the golf of today and the really great golf

of the past, the time when the history of the game as we know it was being built up, that link being comprised in the human person of our Willie. For, you see, Willie Park was really one of "the boys of the old brigade." In this respect there was none like him, and, therefore, while understanding and somewhat envying the United States of America for the greatest of their gains from us in human golfing material, we gave him very fervently and sincerely our blessing and wished him all manner of good fortune and happiness. Above all, we hoped that some day he would return. Willie is a great golfer with a splendid history, and he is a fine fellow, nice in thought and manner, gentle, true, and ever kind.

II

LET ME REMIND YOU of the kind of link it was that snapped. The most modern players, the great multitude who have come in to the game since the rubber-cored ball helped to enhance its popularity, almost need to be told that Willie Park is one of the greatest champions of golf, for they know and think only of such as Vardon, Taylor, and Braid, with a few of the younger men who seek to follow those giants and begin to be weary of the waiting. Willie Park himself was

twice Open Champion of the game. He was that for the first time in 1887 when he gained the honour at Prestwick, and he was Open Champion again only two years later, when he gained the title at his native Musselburgh after making a tie for it with Andrew Kirkaldy. If there were only three dozen competitors on the first of these occasions and four dozen on the second, still the championships in those days were difficult things to win, for there were some great players on the links. But the race of professional champions that we know had not arisen. When Willie won his second Open Championship and was at the height of his power, Harry Vardon was still in his native Jersey and not a golfer in England had ever heard of him, James Braid was working as a joiner at St. Andrews and still playing golf as an amateur, and J. H. Taylor was still at Westward Ho! Jack Burns had preceded Willie in the championship list, while Mr. John Ball followed him. Then there were Hugh Kirkaldy and Mr. Hilton and Willie Auchterlonie, who still has his headquarters at St. Andrews and makes such beautiful clubs that even such a hardened old veteran as John Ball himself cannot bear to pass his shop without looking in and waggling something, and, sure enough, parting with a little siller in exchange for wood—good wood. Willie Auchterlonie, champion of 1893, and Willie Fernie, professional of Troon, champion of 1883, and as much celebrated now for being the father of splendid young Tom who was wounded early in the war—seem to be the best representatives left of the old days, but they and their family did not play the part in golf as did the Parks. After Willie Auchter-

lonie had made himself champion, J. H. Taylor began to win, and the "old brigade" that the Morrises had led, passed from the scene of triumph forever. Willie Park, none so worthy, stood forward as the last defender of the prestige of that old brigade, and there was something dramatic in the circumstances in which he opposed himself to the new champions from the south, with James Braid coming to join them, who seemed to be exerting full mastery everywhere. Taylor had been champion twice and Vardon once when at last Willie made a great effort at Prestwick in 1898, the scene of his first triumph. He played grandly then and at the end of the third round leading the field, looked a likely winner. But Vardon stole up to him in the last turn, they were virtually level when each had only nine more holes to play, and it came about that when Park stood on the last tee he had to get a 3 to tie. In those days of the gutty the last hole at Prestwick was perhaps not such a comparatively easy 3 as it is today, but anyhow Park drove to the corner of the green, and then putted to within about a yard of the hole. He had that last putt to tie for the championship, and he missed it. That was a sad miss indeed, hardly another to match it in golfing history, and it was missed by one of the very greatest putters the world of golf has ever known, perhaps the greatest. Nobody thought he would miss that putt. Harry was standing beyond the edge of the crowd from which he had been elbowed out, feeling somewhat nervous, minutes seeming like years. He did not think that Park could miss that putt, and he did not like the prospect of playing off with Willie for the championship. But presently

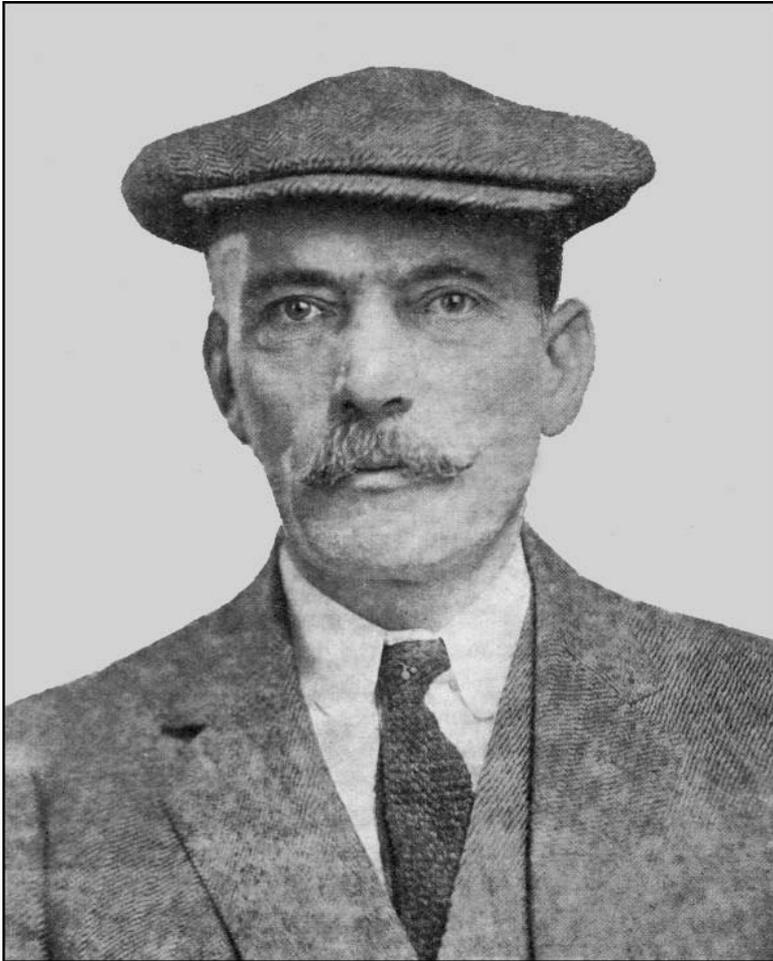
there arose from round the ring of people that peculiar long wailing "O-o-o-h" which tells of the sudden disappointment of a multitude, so different from the exulting shout. Prestwick, you see, is in Scotland, and so much in Scotland that it is but a few shots to the Ayr of Bobby Burns. Southern amateurs had twice before advanced beyond the Tweed and won the Open Championship, but the Scots put it to themselves on those occasions that after all the Open Championship was chiefly a professional event, and therefore these amateur triflings might not count. But here now was the southern professional doing his devil's work on one of the most historic of Scottish greens, that on which the Championship had first been played for, and then for many years in succession, and, for the sake of full tragedy, doing it against the son of the great man who first won that championship. Yes, this was awful work, and sadly was it accepted. There is no better sportsman than Willie Park, and it was nothing against his sportsmanship that he was chagrined by this failure, and none the less because the whole affair was really so much of a success for him. Standing forth for that old brigade (there is no other appropriate term to use), the dying generation, nine years after he had won the championship, and with the insinuation in the air that those old championships were softer things than the newer ones, easier to win, and productive of inferior champions, Park now came out and played as good golf as the very best of the new men. At that time he was very brilliant; Harry Vardon has told me that just then he, Harry, was playing the game as well

as ever he did in his life, and that if he had not been doing so Park would assuredly have beaten him. . . .

Park, unhappy about it all, challenged Vardon afterwards to a home-and-home match for a hundred pounds a side, thirty-six holes at North Berwick and thirty-six at Ganton, to which course, near Scarborough, the new champion was then attached. That match when it was played, and the famous "£400 four-some" some years later, have certainly been the greatest money matches of modern times. There have been other professional games for more than a hundred pounds, but none that created the stir that this did. It was made a national event. People wrote to the papers giving their views on the way it ought to be managed, dissenting from some of the conditions, and generally did their best to exhibit some feeling. When the first half of the game was played at North Berwick the disposition of Scotland was to make a national festival of it, and the dangers of attempting to crowd so much of the population of the kingdom on to a narrow strip of coast facing the Bass Rock was so real that it was arranged the Prince of Wales should visit Edinburgh that day (as some would put it facetiously) and so draw off a part of the people. This strategy succeeded to some extent, the lukewarm golfers being tempted to the capital to take a view of royalty, but seven thousand stalwarts of the links went to North Berwick and did their duty there. This was the first time that ever a golf match was really organized and arranged. There were stewards, flag waggors—with "P's" and "V's" on their banners—ropeholders and all the other paraphernalia to which we have become well

accustomed since. They were all new then, and were very impressive. That was the beginning of golfing crowds. Freddy Tait himself was umpire on behalf of Park, and Norman Hunter was a forecaddie. The wars have had them both. The game was worthy of

per figures, and thus it happened that the first ten holes were halved. When the tensity was relaxed it was Park who won a hole, and Scotland then took a flask from its pocket and made an enthusiastic pull. Yet the southron was two up on the day's play....It



WILLIE PARK
(Photographed especially for THE AMERICAN GOLFER.)

the interest in it, and never in a great match has there appeared to be such meticulous care on the part of the contestants, fearing to let anything slip, anxious not to overlook any possibility of advantage. In solemnity and silence they drove and putted on in very correct manner and strictly pro-

was good for Scotland that it was spared the sight of what happened at Ganton three weeks later. Cheered by the fact of having made himself two up on the greatest match player of his time on his own course, Vardon in the second half of the match did the fullest justice to his genius, and

he won by eleven up and ten to play.

Willie Park played in the championship for many years after that. He was still a great golfer, and still obviously capable of playing a hard game with the very best of the new school. But it must be remembered that, having been born in February, 1864, he was becoming no younger, and other and greater interests than the mere playing of the game were arising in his life. There was the business in Cannon Street, London, and presently he became largely and closely interested in the great Huntercombe estate in Oxfordshire and the magnificent course that was laid out on it. His services as golf architect, in which capacity he had taken a place of supremacy, were greatly in demand at this time when, with the "golf boom" really beginning, there was a call for courses everywhere. So we began to notice him less and less in public golf, but still for many years he made it a point to appear in the Open Championship, just like any other professional, for to the end Willie showed the very best *esprit de corps*. One of my last recollections of him on a golf course was of watching him approaching the famous Road hole at St. Andrews during the championship, the famous caddie, "Fiery," carrying his clubs for him as he always did and conferring with his chief, not for the first time or the fiftieth, upon the peculiar problems presented in the effort to place the ball upon this elusive strip of green. Such a memory gratefully lingers. Willie is in America and "Fiery" is with his fathers. Time goes on... Perhaps you will begin to realise a little better now why we do so specially regard Willie as being the last of the old brigade, and the sense of loss that was created when he went away.

BUT YET that is only half the story, for it was his name and lineage and the achievement of his father that gave so much to the dignity and importance of Willie Park, the younger, when backed up so well as it was by his own prowess and performance. The Parks of Musselburgh! There were only the Morrises of St. Andrews that could ever be compared to them. Father and son here made the immediate succession as no other pair but the Morrises did. No other men who were relatives gained the honours of the Open Championship, and in some respects the record of the Parks is better than that of the Morrises. "Auld Wullie" was something like a pioneer, and he was the very first winner of the Open Championship, when it was played for at Prestwick in 1860, Tom Morris, senior, gaining the Belt in the two following years, after which Willie, senior, came again. In 1866 he was champion for the third time, as old Tom had become before him; Tom gained his fourth in 1867, and Willie responded in 1874. But the family business was now becoming a curious and complicated thing, for while old Tom brought in his son, young Tom, and saw him whip off four championships in succession, beginning with the year after Tom won his last, Park, who as yet had no son big enough for championships had the felicity of seeing brother Mungo come in for victory in 1874. Park winning again in the following year that was the end of the reign of the seniors. The period followed when Jamie Anderson and Bob Ferguson dazzled the mid-Victorian golfers, and at last in Jubilee year, young Willie was ready for victory and obtained it. He was the only descendant of those great pioneers; the mantle

of the earliest champions was upon him; he was a living reminder of the great days of old, the link between quite primitive golf when Allan Robertson achieved such wonders on St. Andrews links and these new days when people everywhere seemed to become strangely attracted towards this game, and hardly any more was it being regarded as purely and exclusively Scottish. His manners at the game, his feeling towards it, and all else supported his exceptional position and made of him a respected and a most particular personality. Now, you understand why Willie Park, the younger, was not like the rest.

III

IT IS WORTH WHILE for good entertainment's sake to make some excursion now, when there is such good opportunity and excuse, to those distant days when golf history was in the making, and the game in its sporting atmosphere and men was not less rich than it is now, though its numbers were so many fewer. "Auld Wullie" was indeed a tremendous man; in all the records of golf there is not a more glowing character. And on the links he was never afraid of anybody or anything; he was the most venturesome, daring, full-blooded golfer that the history of the past can yield to our contemplation. All who saw him play agreed upon it that he had a beautiful swing, round, easy and graceful. Allan Robertson, after watching him once, remarked "He frichtens us a' wi' his lang driving!" The veteran authority, Mr. Doleman, once wrote an interesting note upon him, which I shall quote—"In addressing his ball when driving, Willie's position differed from most golfers, his right foot being a little in front in-

stead of his left. He had as pretty a swing as one could wish to see. It was not what you would call a long swing, but a beautiful round swing. The club did not descend away down the back almost to the ground, as is the case with many possessing a very long swing, but described, as it were, a circle round the head. So clean did he strike the ball, and with such force, that on many occasions when I have stood close behind him the meeting of the club and the ball sounded more like the report of a pistol than anything else. He played splendid long approaches with his cleek, but was never what might be called great with his iron. For want of a better name Willie was what you might call a wooden club player. For many years he had in his possession two clubs which he used to tell me ought to be framed on account of the many important matches he had won by their help. One was a little old cleek, and the other his famous old wooden putter... The long spoon was also a powerful weapon in his hands. With it a bad-lying ball went away as if it had been shot from some rocket apparatus."

That putter here referred to is probably the most historic putter in the world and it is still in the possession of Willie Park, the living. It passed out of the family at one time, but came back to young Willie in due course, and he is very proud of it as he has a right to be. It is a fine old wooden putter. I have already suggested what most people know, that Willie Park, the younger, was and still is one of the very greatest of putters. That marvellous ability was partly cultivated but also partly inherited, for "auld Wullie" was one of the most marvellous of men upon the

putting green. When his ball was as much as six or seven feet from the hole it was as good as in, for he rarely missed at that distance. The knowledge of his power with putts of this kind gave him a peculiar confidence when dealing with the long ones. He seemed to know that however much he overshot the hole he would be sure with the next one, and so he played the ball up boldly from the edge of the green, and as he had a marvellous eye and hand for the line, the number of long putts that he holed was extraordinary. If his opponents could not beat him in the long game their chance of doing so in the short one was extremely small.

Auld Wullie was out for honours. He feared nobody, and he wished to contest with all. In those very early days when he was just rising to his best, that being in the few years preceding the institution of the Open Championship, Allan Robertson, the professional prince of St. Andrews, was regarded as the greatest golfer of the time and not without reason, and thus Allan had a great reputation to preserve. It was not for nothing that old Tom Morris, for a long time associated with Allan in his club and ball making business, described him as "the cunningest bit body o' a player, I dae think, that iver haun'led cleek an' putter. An' a kindly body, tae, as it-weel does fit me to say, an' wi' a' wealth o' slee pawky tun about him." Allan was so cunning that, having seen Wullie play, he made up his mind that he was not going to play him if he could help it. His reputation would be in jeopardy. On the other hand, Wullie was truculent, and soon gave Allan to understand he wanted to match himself against him and was not afraid of him. Allan put him off

by saying it was no the richt thing for a wee body like Wullie to be wantin a mautch wi sic an ane as him, Allan, and it would be weel enoo' if he would come to ask him agin when he had beaten the likes o' Willie Dunn and Tom Morris. Yet Park did want that match with Allan, and went from home to St. Andrews and prowled about the place hoping to lure the master on. That was the first time he ever went to St. Andrews. It was about 1864. Dr. Argyll Robertson found him once making his first round on the old course, practising in the hope of the match that he thought might come. He did 86 in that round, which was splendid for those days. However Allan would not bite, and so Wullie turned his attention to the Morris family. First he beat George, the brother of Tom, and then old Tom took him on himself. This was in 1864, Park then being twenty-one. The pair agreed to play thirty-six holes for fifty pounds, and at the end of the match Park was five up. This game was played at St. Andrews, and the natives, who have never been famous for impartiality, did not like it. They had watched the match in large numbers, and at the end of it they swarmed round the victor and shouted "Where's the man that beat Morris?" and someone shouted jeeringly back, "He's no man; he's only a laddie without whiskers." After that Tom challenged his conqueror to play him at North Berwick, where Park was then located, and the result was the same. These two matches led to a tremendous rivalry between the pair, and they played in many other matches for a hundred pounds a side, usually over four courses, St. Andrews, Prestwick, Musselburgh and North Berwick, and Tom did much

better towards the end. The last game of all between them was played in 1882 and Tom was the winner, having had the good fortune to lay his opponent five or six stymies in the course of the match. They were photographed together afterwards, and when the photographer was arranging them, Willie playfully pushed Tom in front and said "Mak' a stymie, mak' a stymie!" Although Wullie beat Willie Dunn as well Allan Robertson was quite determined not to play him, and would not fulfil his promise. He was fixed on nothing so much as that. It used to be said and still is that in an important match Allan was never beaten. This is not strictly correct, for surely Willie Dunn beat him. In the most famous match between these two, however, Allan was victor, and it settled the question of their relative supremacy. As a recognised match that was surely the longest on record, for it consisted of twenty rounds and lasted ten days! I believe it was decided by rounds and not by holes; at all events the official result is that "honest Allan," as some called him, won on the last day by two rounds and one to play. "A pawky auld buddie!" Willie always called him. He himself was so different, so adventurous. He would have won the championship in the second year of its existence as well as the first, but for his madness, as everybody regarded it, in trying to cross the Alps at Prestwick with his second, for which daring he was terribly punished. One day he went to North Berwick to play David Strath for £50, but his backers did not turn up as they should have done, and he was short of the necessary money. When he had scraped together all he could he found that he was still £15 short, but then

he espied the eminent Mr. Edward Blyth who made up the deficiency. He played the match, won it, gave Mr. Blyth his fifteen and the other fifteen with it, and went home contented with the balance. Those of old were brave days....

IV.

SEE NOW how young Willie with such a golfing parent, was blooded to the game. Clearly it was golf for him from the start. Willie was born at Musselburgh, and his first recollection of the game is not so much of striking a ball as having been struck by one. He was only some four years of age when a friend of his father's gave a club to Willie and another to his brother Frank, and they went out to try their childish skill with them. Frank warned Willie that he was about to drive in his direction, but the latter heeded not, with the result that he received the ball full in his mouth and fell on his back from the shock of the impact. In those days in Musselburgh it was all golf. The famous nine holes course was as the heart of the ancient burgh, and the clubmakers' shops that were adjacent to it were the hives of industry and good gossip. The young Willie even before his schooldays began, was fascinated by his father's shop, and would beg the loan of tools and try to make clubs of a kind with them. And, as driving was then beyond his power, he played at putting, and the baby practice which he had must surely have been a strong influence upon his after game. We find that in the case of many of the best putters of the time they had childish practice of this kind. He made little holes in the cracks in the pavement outside the shop, and there he played

putting matches against himself, putting with marbles. He was glad if anyone would ever play with him, as they seldom did. He made holes to putt at everywhere; he seemed always looking for holes, and regarded every depression in the ground as a potential hole. His father's shop had a brick floor, and hollows were worn in the bricks. The boys found it made quite good and certainly difficult putting to play these hollows. By this time they had ascended to the use of the regular gutty balls, and the difficulty in the putting was that the strength had to be so marvellously regulated or the ball would slip out at the other side of the hollow. Anything that has golf in it seems to have its fascination for mankind, and Willie and his friends become overpowered by this game upon the bricks, so much so that, the daylight not being sufficient to cool their enthusiasm, they would secure possession of the key to the shop at night and go there to do more putting by candle light. Willie took this putting very seriously, and he said to me in latter days—"Putting has always, as you know, been a strong part of my game since the beginning, and I often think that perhaps the training of my eye and the extreme delicacy of touch that came to me through this continual putting on the bricks, which I did for years, was of great assistance to me when I came to do the comparatively easy putts on real greens."

His great chum as a small boy was the son of his father's old rival, Willie Dunn. The boy also was named Willie; he went to America long ago and was the very first winner of the American Open Championship, that being in 1894. These boys were great

friends and rivals, they played together continually, and, the sporting instinct being strong in them, they played each other all the time for the full extent of their private possessions, including clubs, balls, and the very few pennies that they could occasionally muster. And so they had their ups and downs and became alternately rich and poor at each other's expense. That continued until they were eleven or twelve years of age, and then Willie Dunn had to go away. There were only two or three golf clubs in the south in those days, and the chief of them was the old one at Blackheath where Tom Dunn, brother of this young Willie, was professional. It seemed that he needed some assistance in his shop, and so he undertook to take Willie in hand and train him. So little Willie went away, but before he went they twain had one parting match that was greater than all the rest, and full eighteen pence, the most they could collect was staked upon it. It was over two rounds of the nine-hole course of Musselburgh. I should not waste time in stating any of the facts and circumstances of this boy's match did not Willie Park assure me not long ago, and will assure anyone else at the present time, that this was the greatest and most important match in which he ever played, for it is the one that lives in his memory most, that of which he has the most vivid remembrances, that upon which his contemplations most happily linger. These certainly are strong considerations and the match itself was good enough for anything, for by the time the contestants came to the last green of all they were at full grips with each other, and it came about that while Willie Park was dormy one,

Willie Dunn had only to hole a putt of eighteen inches to win the last hole and halve the match with him. He studied that putt, the line of it and all the conditions and circumstances with the most special care, but he missed it after all. It was a tragic moment when he did so. His countenance took on a look of blank horror and dismay, for a moment he was speechless and then in broken tones exclaimed, "Man, I could let a wee bairn strike me in the mouth!" Such was the parting game between the boy who was to be first Open Champion of America and his friend who was destined for the championship twice.

Willie was an earnest boy. He came by some very fair skill in club-making before his schooldays were over, and his imaginative and practical mind was turned to the question as to whether a ball better than the gutty could not be made—better in the sense that it could be driven further. There is some reason for thinking that this boy made the first rubber ball that was ever used for golf, failure as it was. He prepared a mixture of ground rubber, ground cork and gutta percha, and forced it down a funnel into an iron mould. It looked well enough when it has been set and released from the mould, but after a few shots had been played with the ball it swelled and fell to pieces, so the idea was given up. But young Willie was a very expert hammerer of the gutty balls which in those days were hammered and roughened after manufacture so as to assist their flight—the beginning of the marking of the ball. They came plain from the moulds, and were then hammered at a cost of sixpence a dozen, each ball receiving from 240 to 280

blows, according to size. Willie Park told me that it used to take him about two and a half minutes to hammer a ball well, and that he was considered a very good hammerer, having invented a system by which he kept his right elbow fast to his side while his forearm worked like a lever, so that he could always depend on the hammer coming down exactly to the same spot each time while his left hand worked the ball round.

If the training of Willie Park to the game of golf was a little casual, as it was with all the players of the olden time, still there was a thoroughness about it. Like others he watched and copied, and, to his benefit, he watched his father most and copied him considerably. Often did he carry Old Willie's clubs for him in his big matches, and young Willie always said that he owed as much to the parental precept and example as to anything else. Wise was the advice that old Willie gave: none could give it better. "Listen Wullie!" he would say to the boy. "Remember that a mauch weel made is a mauch half won," and the boy never forgot that wise expression. The old Scots knew better how to make matches than any other men, and they realised that in the making of the match, with the evidence and the arguments that were advanced and pressed, there was the joy of effort and the exercise of capacity in friendly conflict. It was the best day's work to win a match, or a part of it, before taking to the teeing ground, and to win it in play afterwards. Then it could all be done over again in the clubhouse after dark, and that made all complete. Because of the competitions and the medal rounds and all the modern

fanglements, the art of match play has somewhat declined in recent times, and with it the art of making the match. Willie's elder brother, Frank, also taught him very much of his game. They two played Willie Fernie and Willie Campbell at Alnmouth when Willie was only seventeen years of age, and they won the match by Willie holing out with an iron shot at the last hole. His uncle,

with Willie Fernie, and tying again when they played the four rounds a second time. They played two more rounds and were still level with one hole to play, but Fernie won at the last. A few years later, in 1883, he went back to Musselburgh to help his father in his clubmaking business. Three or four seasons afterwards the great boom in golf began in Britain, and the Parks became a very busy



The Putting-Green at the Fifth Hole at Westward Ho!

Mungo Park, was professional at Alnmouth then, and, when very young indeed, young Willie became himself professional at Ryton-on-Tyne not very far away, and stayed there until he was twenty-one. During this period he and his father played a family match against old Tom Morris and Jimmy Morris, his son, the Parks being conquerors, while another memorable thing that occurred, like the other, at Alnmouth, was Willie making a tie of it for first place in a four-rounds competition

clubmaking firm, sometimes working day and night. The business claimed all the time of Willie, and his play was neglected. But for this he might have been an even greater player than he was and is.

V.

STILL IT WAS at this time of the great discovery of golf by the multitude that Willie, in 1887, won his first Open Championship. It was a gallant victory. He had no thought of playing in the great event until the

time for it was nigh. He had not even struck a ball for full seven months until the thought of the championship came into his mind, and then, when he decided to play at Prestwick, he gave himself a month to the game. At the end of the period he was playing excellent golf, and felt he had a chance of winning. Feeling so, he wished to make the most of the possibility and tried to back himself, but the business was bad. No better odds than five to one could he obtain, and even at that the utmost amount that he could get taken about his chance was ten shillings. The financial outlook was, therefore, not stimulating. He was partnered with Willie Fernie, and in the starting list they were placed just in front of Willie Campbell, who was then professional at Prestwick, playing a good game and regarded hopefully for the championship, which, by the way, consisted in those times of two rounds and was settled in a single day. In the first round Campbell took a good lead with a fine round of 77 to Park's 82, but the latter made up for it in the second round, and when they had only four holes to play it seemed that Campbell was only leading by a single stroke. But he gained another at the fifteenth, and it looked then that he must be victor. The sixteenth is the hole where the corner of the great Cardinal bunker comes into consideration on the right of the line, and the problem of that hole on this particular day was complicated by the fact that there was a very strong wind blowing from the sea. Park played the hole to perfection, making a good wind allowance and getting a fine three as the result, but Campbell got into the Cardinal, took shot after

shot, made his position worse with every one of them, and finally was 9 to the hole. Of course he had lost the championship then and Willie Park had won it, and never was there a more tragic conclusion to an Open Championship. Certainly Willie Park had won, but he had some odd shots to pay before he had finished. He had one at the Alps, the seventeenth hole, where his ball lay hard against a bank, and he had to send it high towards the heavens in order to bring it down on to the green which was only thirty yards away; and again at the last hole his ball from the tee shot was poised high on the top of some whins. However, all ended well, and, champion Willie hurried home to the clubmaker's shop at Musselburgh. Next morning betimes, he was working away at his bench, and an old Scottish gentleman, a keen amateur at the game, looked in at the open door on his way to the links and saw him there. It seemed to the spectator that the fitness of things was not properly suited. He opened his eyes very wide in astonishment, and half in wonder and something in reproach he gasped, "Man alive! ye're working there as if nothing had happened!"

Two years went by, and then Willie was champion for the second time. That happened at Musselburgh, and it was fitting that the last time the event was played on the historic old course it was won by one of the most famous players that had ever been bred upon it—though not won without a struggle for Andrew Kirkaldy made a tie of it with Willie then. Musselburgh in golf becomes less and less of anything but a name, but what a history it has had, and what a nursery of golfers it has been!

Here was the first home of that great society, the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, and here so many of the great matches of the old days were played. Although there were but nine holes at Musselburgh then, the golfing reputation of the place, so near to Edinburgh, and the chief course of the Scottish capital, stood scarcely less than that of St. Andrews. In the days of the gutty ball, too, they were good holes, and made a hard test of the game, while some of them, like "Pandy"—which is short for "Pandemonium", the name for a dreaded bunker at the hole which winds up with a finely placed plateau green—were famous everywhere. In those days some of the bunkers of Musselburgh had their fame as much as those of St. Andrews. "Lord Shand's" was one of the best of them. And some of the landmarks of the course were very celebrated, like "Mrs. Forman's", the inn by the third putting green which is one of the most famous of golfing inns at which players and caddies ever refreshed themselves and gathered force for the further combat. In this second and last winning championship of Willie Park, Andrew Kirkaldy, who was playing immediately in front of him, was two strokes to the good when they had only four holes to play, and there was much excitement. Musselburgh wanted Willie for the victor, but it seemed to be going hard with him. At the fifteenth he consulted his caddie as to whether it would be well for him to take his brassie for the second shot, but the man was in such a state of mind that he could not answer. Andrew was still two to the good when there were three holes to play and then on the sixteenth

green Willie had to hole a seven-yards' putt for a 3 which he knew he dared not miss, and just as he was bringing his putter on to the ball he heard a great shout go up from around the green in front and said to himself that Andrew was doing well, but holed his own putt just the same. It was well that he kept his nerve so well, for it turned out afterwards that the cheer was not for Andrew at all but for his partner who there in the championship had done that hole in one stroke. Andrew indeed had taken 4 at the hole where Willie got his 3, and so the latter gained a point. Playing the last hole Willie's ball hit a man on the head from the drive. Championships seemed to be full of strange adventures in those days. With his second our man laid his ball close to the side of the hole and put it in with his next, and thereby tied. It was almost dark then, and Willie, as we know, won when playing off. According to all the rules and regulations, two championships should have meant two gold medals for the winner, but Willie has only one, and that is not of gold but silver gilt. The management of championships then was not what it is now. They advertised that there would be gold medals, but put Willie off with a silver gilt one the first time; and, when he won again, he suggested to the committee that unless they could give him the real thing this time he would rather be without it altogether. And they took him at his word, and he went without. . . One of the big events of his best period was his great match with J. H. Taylor, which he won.

Talking to me once about those old times, and the old and never to be settled question as to whether golf

was played as well then as now, Willie Park said he could not bring himself to believe that in real skill the present generation is any better than the old one. "Clubs are better," he said, "and the balls fly further, but I do not think that the golf that is played is one whit better than it was in the good old days, for good they really were. Who among amateurs now plays the game better than it used to be played by Mr. Leslie Balfour-Melville? I hope it will not seem like conceit in me if I make a comparison between my own play in the early period and a much later one, which I only do because it is that which is most convincing to me personally of the truth of what I say. As far back as 1885, I played in an open tournament that was held at Troon, and won the first prize. All the finest players of the time competed, including the great Bob Ferguson, who was really a very great golfer and became Open Champion three years in succession, Willie Fernie, Willie Campbell and others. Thirteen years later Harry Vardon only beat me in the championship at Prestwick by a putt that I never ought to have missed. I can play the game quite as well now as I did then. If that is the case does it not then suggest that, making proper allowance for difference of materials, courses and conditions, the champions of the olden time were as good as the champions of today. All may not think so, but I hold strongly to this view, though I have no desire to detract from the great skill and wonderful achievements of the golfers of the present time, whose play I admire enormously."

It is some eight or nine years since Willie said that to me, and much has happened since then, though I doubt

if his opinion has to any extent changed. Willie belonged to the old time himself, the latter days of it, and he is intensely loyal to his period. Musselburgh is in his blood and bones, the old history and traditions of the game, its romance and its heroes are to him as things that are sacred, and their value and consequence shall never be minimised in his mind. Fine in his loyalty always is Willie Park.

Many and interesting are the trophies and souvenirs of the game that he possesses. There is the famous old family putter of which we have already spoken, and a club that once belonged to Allan Robertson. And among other things he has a photograph signed and dated by Her Royal Highness, the Princess Victoria, about which there is an odd story to be told. King Edward and Queen Alexandra, with the Princess, were staying once at Godsall, Leicestershire, as the guests of Lord Howe. The latter was at that time President of the Huntercombe Golf Club, with which Willie was so intimately associated, and he asked Willie to go along there, to Gopsall, one day to take part in some golf that was to be played. He was set to be the partner of the Princess in a foursome. The Princess knew more than a little of golf, and when the game was ended she gave praises to a brasseys that Willie had lent her for the game, and with which she had done some excellent shots. He thereupon said that it would be a great honour to him if the Princess would accept the club. She took it, but when he happened to remark that he thought highly of that particular brasseys and had used it in many of his biggest matches, she rejoined, "No, No, Mr. Park, I will not

take from you a club that you value so much!" but Willie's humble gallantry and command of speech were ready for the occasion, and he answered that if it had not been a good club and one that he much prized, he should not have presumed to ask her acceptance of it. So she took it, and the next day her mother, the Queen, went to Willie when he was out on the course and said, "Victoria has told me all about the club. It was very good of you to present it to her," and then a few days afterwards he received the photograph of which mention has been made.

VI

IN THE COURSE of time Willie's interests fixed him exclusively in the south. Much as they deserved to do, and great as was the work he did for golf in many ways, they did not all prosper. He was one of the first—I think we might almost agree that he was the first—to perceive the possibilities of inland golf course construction on the finer, grander system that we know now. He saw the immense golf boom that was coming, the demand that there must inevitably be for many, new inland courses of a better and more interesting type than were generally in existence then. Up to then the manner of designing and making a hole was to put a plain straight bank across the course in front to be driven over, this arrangement, with a little sand in front of it, being known as a bunker, and, if the hole were long enough, there was a similar contrivance set up immediately in front of the putting green. Generally nothing more was considered necessary, though if some elaboration was desired similar banks were stuck up somewhere on the left or on the

right. None of these things were beautiful to look upon, they gave no character to the holes, this being supplied only by such local natural features as trees, watercourses and ponds; they were not in the least interesting, and they made most holes look very much like each other. Nor did they tend to the smallest improvement in the game of any player. This was Victorian golf architecture, the standard for which was set by that indefatigable master of it, Willie Dunn, who made his professional mark on multitudinous patches of land in many parts of the country. Willie Park perceived that there would soon be a demand for something very much better, and he set himself to devise it, to give to inland courses some of the attributes of those at the seaside where the holes were fashioned by Nature and abounded in features and strong character. With imagination and money it could be done. This scheme marked the beginning of the new principles in course architecture that have since revolutionized the whole of inland golf, not merely in England, but in parts of the continent of Europe, all over the United States, Canada, and everywhere. Huntercombe and Sunningdale were Willie Park's first productions. He was responsible for the primary designs of the architecture of the latter, a beautiful course cut out of a wilderness of heather on some high, rolling land in Berkshire. Mr. Colt soon set himself to work on the first designs when they had been applied, and he has carried out vast improvements on the original model, so that Sunningdale, as we know it now, the inland course that I still consider as the best and most delightful to play upon in the whole of Britain, is not

at all what it was at first. Still Willie was in at the beginning with Sunningdale; that is a lasting distinction. But he was much more closely concerned with Huntercombe, a fine piece of land in Oxfordshire, very high up on a spur of the Chiltern Hills. In many respects the situation of Huntercombe was ideal, and it attracted great fame to itself, but it suffered from lack of accessibility, a difficult uphill motor-car journey having to be made from the Henley station six miles away. Also it was a long time before a proper clubhouse could be built, and the only accommodation was in a local farmhouse which was taken over for the purpose, and there was trouble with the water supply. These difficulties have been overcome since then, but, unfortunately for Willie who invested his money in the undertaking, he had to bear the brunt of them. However he laid out on these hills at Huntercombe a glorious course with greens that were wonderfully spacious and splendid. The bunkering was done with imagination and ingenuity, and the holes had fine character. Willie set himself, as a particular labour of love, to copy old "Pandy" at Musselburgh, with its plateau green, and produced a really fine copy—with improvements—making many special journeys between Huntercombe and Musselburgh for the purpose. It was then, and it still is, one of the best pleasures in golf to play the game at this place, but financially the venture did not then thrive. Willie had £11,500 of his own money in it, and it was mostly lost. But for that, America would probably not have had him now.

VII

ALWAYS is it a pleasure to watch

Willie Park playing the game of golf. It is evidently such a pleasure to him, and is such a simple, easy business. No anxiety in his demeanour or his actions is betrayed when he takes his club in hand and strides up to the ball. He is just going to play a game and play it well, and enjoy himself. It was always said of him that he made the game look so very easy. The same thing has been said of others of the greatest professionals of modern times, but it was Willie Park who first called forth such a remark, and it is he who has deserved it better than any other. All his strokes seem to be played not merely with ease and gentleness but with an absence of force—though the force is there just the same—and his swings in every case are comparatively slow. No effort is apparent. Very different as he is in his golfing ways from Harry Vardon, these two have that grand feature in common in their game. Park is a tall, loose-limbed man, and his is a very free swing, perhaps more so than that of any other champion of modern times. He is so constituted, physically and temperamentally, that he keeps his movements, loose as they seem to be, well under control. He does not swing as far as he might, although he does swing very far, and in other ways it is clear that he exercises some restraint. But his swings are loose all the same, and the chief criticism that has been cherished against his style in the making of the longer shots in that they are too loose, and, if employed by any other man, this style would probably cause much trouble, especially if the game were going against him and he were inclined to press. That is when the worst of a looseness of style is found out. But

it is yet a pleasure to watch the smoothness of his movements, and there never was a player with a finer smoothness in his putting. Indeed he strokes the ball, lovingly, coaxingly, and, being treated so kindly it takes to the hole far oftener than is the case when most great golfers endeavour to force it there.

One thing very noticeable in all his strokes is the beautiful delicacy of his grip. He does not believe himself either in the palm grip, or in any form of grip in which the thumbs are held on the shaft. He likes a plain grip, with the club grasped in the fingers and hardly anywhere else than in the fingers. He says the club should lie across the roots of the fingers and that it should not be held too tightly with them either, for he holds that a tight grip wearies the hands and wrists without giving any benefit to the stroke. If the club is held sufficiently firmly to prevent its slipping or turning that is all that is necessary, and to hold it any more tightly is a mistake and a useless expenditure of force. He has made some interesting observations on the part of the handle of the club which is gripped, allowing that it is not a matter for strict rule, that idiosyncrasy must have its fling and that gripping low down is justifiable when a heavy club is used, just as gripping near to the end comes naturally to a man who plays with a light club. Still he thinks that, when it can be done, it is best to grip as near to the end of the shaft as possible, and he himself carries out this principle to a farther extreme than any other player I can call to mind, for he grips with his left hand really beyond the end of the shaft, that is to say the end of the shaft is in the palm of that hand. He says that experience

has proved to him that this grip gives the left hand sufficient power to prevent the club slipping and lessens the tendency that exists of trying to guide the club with it, this tendency being a common cause of pulling and slicing.

He favours the open stance in driving, with the ball slightly to the right of imaginary line that might be drawn from the left heel, believing that in every way this position encourages easy and accurate swinging, and a fair follow through. In the case of the square stance, when the toes are virtually in line with each other, or even as in the olden times when Willie was champion and the man of the time, the left foot of some golfers was even placed a little in front of the right, such a position being positively recommended by some of the old authorities, he thinks a rather wild and uncertain style of driving is encouraged. The follow-through is not then such a comfortable thing, pulling is given its chance, the body finds a difficulty in getting itself faced to the direction in which the ball is flying or ought to be flying, and said body seems to pivot on the left foot and entices the club to swing round the body. All these things do not necessarily happen; it is stating the case at its worst and as that of a man to whom the square stance does not seem to come naturally. Others, as we all know, get the best conceivable results from it.

Some of the points he makes about the swinging of the club are lucid and instructive. He gives a warning against excessive body movement, saying that the turning of the shoulders, the slackening at the hips and knees, and the lifting of the left heel, that movement which beginners are

so often taught wrongfully at the beginning as if the extensive lifting of the heel and pivoting on the fore part of the foot were a sacred rite without which there could be no golfing salvation, thereby contracting such an exaggeration as often hurts their game for the rest of their lives, are all movements that should be undertaken in moderation and should be made only to such an extent as would enable the club to be swung in comfort. Like all good teachers and great players, he impresses upon us the necessity of keeping the right elbow well into the side until the rising club insists upon its release. The arm in this matter should always follow the club and should never be in advance of it. If the arm goes first, all the proper movements fail.

In his recommendations upon the follow through he gives us the curious information that his father, old Willie, who, like all the old golfers, believed to the uttermost and practised completely this most salutary doctrine, used to follow through so enthusiastically that he would often run a yard or two after his drive! Splendid Wullie! How also he counselled against pressing! I remember reading some time ago in a most interesting life of Almond, the famous headmaster of Loretto, by Mr. R. J. Mackenzie, a little sketch of old Willie in which it was said that the boys of the school would sometimes meet him of a morning when he was out practising at Musselburgh, and they would hear him say, "Dinna press, Meister Paterson! Ye'll mak' a graun gowffer if ye can ware pressin'. Noo see my ba' lyin' here, a maitter of a hunder and fifty yairds frae the hole, and a' they naisty whuns atween; but takin' an easy swing and no pressin'

(click!), ye see I hae drappit her just ahint the pin." The modern Willie mentions that in his time there were quite a number of golfers who in order to make the club-head travel as long as possible in the direction of the ball, instead of holding their bodies steady, and twisting on their backbones as it were, would sway to the right as the club went up, and resume their normal position when it came down again, and while Willie says, or said some years ago, that theoretically this might improve the swing (surely any such theory must be wrong!) experience indicated that any gain that came through it was nullified by slowness of the movement of the body and a considerable inaccuracy that was engendered, making true hitting difficult and unlikely. One had forgotten that there was any recognised set of people in the old days who did this sort of thing, and there is only one player in the front class today who does so, that, of course, being Ray. An old maxim that he thinks should be absorbed in more restricted doses than is commonly the case in our old friend, the Slow Back. He does not, of course, like a fast back in the driving swing, but thinks that in this matter as in so many others the best thing is the happy medium, and he cannot remember any of the best players having had a slow back style although many of them have developed very quick swings. What is most frequently desired by the professors who urge the virtues of the slow back, if they only knew it, is a backward swing so smooth as to be without a jerk. It is the jerk that does the harm and not the speed, if the speed is sufficiently moderate.

In the matter of putting, Willie Park has naturally much that is wise

and good to say. He likes to examine the line of his putt from the back of the hole, preferring this to the front view as giving a quicker and more accurate idea of the path along which the ball must travel if it is to find its way to the right place. Then also he is a believer in the old system, so much less practised nowadays, of selecting a particular spot on the green, in the case of anything more than short putts, and aiming at that, so that if the ball passes over it, it should run on to the hole. Willie believes in the spot, though nowadays most players look at the hole and fancy the line from their ball to it all the way. Select the right spot, says Willie, be sure that your ball passes over it, and then, if the strength is right, it must go into the hole, which evidently is true enough. He naturally insists on confidence in putting, and believes that the hesitator is generally lost. Therefore, while he does not counsel haste on the

green, he warns you that the longer you hang over the ball in doubt and wonderment the more difficult does the putt appear and the less likely is it to be dealt with in a successful manner. A point that he urges, and which is, no doubt, right though all the world is not in agreement with him, is that one of the secrets of good putting is to hit the ball and the ball only and not to let the putter graze the grass. He prefers, instead of the latter, to strike the ball so that the putter is just a little above the turf. The stroke should be made from the wrists only and the line of the swing, backwards and forwards, should be the line to the hole always, and the head of the club should not depart from it. And he believes in bold, firm putting...But Willie Park is full of golfing wisdom, and, if there seems to be no limit to its extent and its value, there must be to our quotation.

