GREAT GOLFERS
Their Methods at a Glance

BY GEORGE W. BELDAM

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY
HAROLD H. HILTON
J. H. TAYLOR JAMES BRAID ALEX. HERD
HARRY VARDON

ILLUSTRATED
BY 268 ACTION-PHOTOGRAPHS

London
MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
1904

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PREFACE

Many works on Golf have appeared, most of which seem to have been written, not so much with the idea of helping the enthusiast, as of making pleasant reading, and, I take it, this is not the sumnum bonum of every golfer's existence. Every such enthusiast, and I venture to believe there are many, has taken to himself, either consciously or unconsciously, some golfer in quite the first flight, as his model, whose style he considers most coincides with his own ideas of the game as it should be played,—and which appeals to him as the most likely to fit in with his own peculiarities or physique.

Should such an one find in these pages his own ideal, I hope the photographs, together with the letterpress facing each, will be of some use to him, as showing the methods of the golfer he has chosen for his example. For he need no longer take a railway journey of many miles to try to gauge for himself the position of his model's feet to the ball—how far back his club swings or how his club finishes for each kind of stroke. In these pages he can see the stance at a glance, as each golfer is standing on a square of four feet divided into
six-inch squares; and he need not be constantly wondering if he is on the right lines, and is standing as his model does, or following his methods. All this sounds very mechanical, little calculated to produce good golfers—but I know for a fact, some of our best golfers have come to be what they are through much tribulation and striving after their high ideals. They thought out their own games, being influenced by that of others; they paid great attention to the small beginnings, and the result is that after the fruitful drudgery of close practice, they have evolved a game for themselves which makes them in turn the ideal of others. No doubt while they were thinking out their game they were mere copies or poor imitations of those who influenced them, but passing through the necessary schooling they have attained that free and natural style, which deceives the eye of the onlooker, for it is hard for him to believe that such freedom and good results started in the cramped school of imitation or mechanical drudgery. Woe be to that so-called natural player whose knowledge merely consists of the confidence of youth! What if that confidence desert him? He will soon want a surer foundation, and then indeed must be content to be a mere shadow of his former self, and go through the slow process of thinking out his game, before he arise again, not merely a natural player, but having that within him which begets confidence—manufactures it, so to speak, as he requires it.

And this simple process apparently applies to any golfer, whoever he may be, so long as he is desirous of
improving his game in any degree; and I trust that the photographs taken on an entirely novel method will prove of value, not only to such an one as a means of progress, but also to others who care to study the various methods of those who have excelled, and still excel, in the Royal and Ancient game.

I am glad to say H. Vardon, Taylor, Braid, and Herd, each most kindly consented to write some notes on their own strokes illustrated by my photographs of them; these notes have been left unaltered, and they should be most valuable and interesting as showing their different views of the game as they play it.

I am also fortunate in getting Mr. Harold H. Hilton to write a few words on each of the amateurs, criticising their game as he sees it. As Mr. Hilton is the only amateur who has twice won the Open Championship, and has a most keen power of observation beside vast experience of the game, his views are a great addition and help to the correct interpretation of the photographs.

Mr. Hal Ludlow, the well-known artist, has most kindly given his valuable services towards ensuring the truthful reproduction of the photographs in the half-tone process. Mr. Ludlow plays from the scratch mark himself, and I feel my indebtedness to him is great.

Owing to the necessity of having numerous photographs, the number of the players had to be limited.

One rather regrets that the famous quartette of Open Champions are the only professionals in the book, as there are others, both amateur and professionals,
whose influence on the game is hardly less, and whose methods would make a most interesting study. Those who are included in the book have been either Open or Amateur Champions, with the exception of those few amateurs who are internationals.

I am in the happy position of being my own photographer, and I leave the photographs to speak for themselves. I feel sure that all golfers will appreciate not only the device which shows the stance, but the fact that the photographs are taken during an actual stroke, so making them of much more value than the ordinary “posed” illustrations.

Lastly, in order that those who never have the opportunity of seeing the best golfers may know a little more than the photograph shows, their ages, weights and heights are given; these may help those who have not already decided for themselves the methods which they will adopt in regard to stance and swing, but to further attain this object the lengths of various clubs used by Vardon, Taylor, and Braid, men of quite different heights and build, are given. So far as I am concerned, the compilation of the book has given me great pleasure, which I hope may be shared by all readers: I trust that it may be the means of their improvement, and help them while they are thinking out their games, to acquire the knowledge that they are really on the right lines, and so beget that confidence which is so essential to success.

GEORGE W BELDAM.

BOSTON LODGE,
BRENTFORD, MIDDLESEX.
THE device on which the golfers are standing is a square of four feet, subdivided into smaller squares of six inches, measured from the centres of the white lines, which are half-an-inch wide. By counting these six-inch squares the position of the feet to the ball is at once seen for every shot. If the player wishes, by marking these out on the ground he can see and experience for himself the various methods of the different Champions as regards stance, which is of so great importance, and by so doing may possibly adopt for himself sound principles in this respect.

A.B. shows direction. The squares are 6 inches.

The camera looks up and down line C.D. and the ball is placed where C.D. joins A.B.
HARRY VARDON

BY HIMSELF

Open Champion, 1896, 1898, 1899, 1903.
Champion of America, 1900.

Born: 1870, Jersey, Channel Islands.
Weight, 11 stone. Height, 5 feet 9½ inches.

Dear Sir,

I herewith enclose the photographs showing my various strokes, and I have endeavoured to put as plainly as I can some hints on the way I play them, and which I hope may be the means of helping some Golfers to improve their game.

Yours faithfully,

Harry Vardon

12/12/03.

G. W. Beldam, Esq.
GRIP

My grip is not interlocked, but the little finger of the right hand overlaps the first finger of the left. The club is held in the crook of the first finger of the right hand, and lies rather across the palm than in the fingers—the right thumb is over the shaft, rather to the left of the centre. The two middle fingers just close over the club. The little finger overlaps the first finger of the left hand.

I grip firmly with the first finger and thumb, and there is decided pressure with the little finger on the knuckle of the first finger of the left hand. The same principle of grip applies to the left hand—viz., the grip is mostly with the first finger and thumb and the little finger—the left thumb, however, lies down the shaft to the right of the centre, and is decidedly pressed against the side of it with the under part of the right hand. The right palm, which applies this pressure, is gradually eased in the upward swing, until at the top of the swing it no longer presses the left thumb—at the same time the grip of the first finger and thumb and the little finger of the right hand is still as firm as those of the left. On the downward swing the palm of right hand and the left thumb gradually come together, and pressure is again applied at that point where it was eased in the upward swing.

Plate No. III. shows the right hand slightly opened to allow the grip of the left hand and position of the left thumb to be seen.
Plate No. III
Harry Vardon

Grip
Right-hand opened to show position of left thumb
Plate No. IV
Harry Vardon

Address
And Stance
With Driver
DRIVE AND BRASSEY

ADDRESS AND STANCE

I stand firmly, with the weight rather on the right leg, which is in advance of the left about 8 inches.
Knees very slightly bent.
Arms rather away from body.
·Hands about opposite the ball, which is about four inches behind left heel.
For other measurements, see illustration.
MISS RHONA ADAIR
PI.ATE
No. II
MISS RHONA ADAIR
TOP OF SWING WITH DRIVER

PLATE No. II
MISS RHONA ADAIR

TOP OF SWING
WITH DRIVER
Plate No. III
Miss Rhona Adair

Finish with driver
Plate No. IX
Miss Rhona Adair

A CHARACTERISTIC FINISH
CHAMPIONS OF GOLF AND CRICKET
J. H. TAYLOR
DR. W. G. GRACE
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By Hal Ludlow

BRONZE STATUETTE
OF HARRYvardON