

THE Amateur Championship played at Hoylake in 1921 which Mr. W. I. Hunter ultimately won with comparative ease is noteworthy as being the first year in which we were threatened by an American invasion on a grand scale. Although this invasion melted away in the early rounds it none the less provided many thrilling encounters while it lasted. I am not going, however, to narrate how Mr. Allan Graham went out in 33 and beat Mr. Bobby Jones by a handsome margin, nor how Mr. C. J. H. Tolley beat Mr. Guildford by the aid of two enormous putts which he holed on the 15th and 17th greens, nor yet how Mr. Darwin on the 19th green disposed of Mr. Fred Wright, the last of the Americans to fall. All these events are worthy of record, but the outstanding incident in that Championship was what occurred at the 16th hole in the match between Mr. John Ball and Mr. J. Douglas, an American student then in residence at Cambridge University, which he represented at golf. It was one of those extraordinary incidents, dramatic in character, which occasionally occur in golf and make it the uncertain game which it essentially is. No doubt those who favoured Mr. Ball regarded the incident differently from those who favoured Mr. Douglas. To the former it must have appeared as the act of a beneficent providence: the latter could only repeat in the words of the poet, "there are some things for tears."

The match was in all respects a great match: it was evenly contested with almost equal skill, it was a match between age and youth, and it was a match of a local hero against a foreign invader. There is no more charming person anywhere to be found than Mr. Douglas, and no one could be more beloved by those who are fortunate to know him; but to the Hoylake crowd who turned out to support Mr. Ball he was only an ordinary stranger whom they wished to see beaten. When Mr. Ball beat Abe Mitchell in 1912 at Westward Ho! the local fishermen and inhabitants were strongly partisan for Mitchell because they regarded him as a representative of artisan golf, and Mr. Ball as a representative of "gents" and capitalism. But at Hoylake there is no such class distinction. The great veteran is the idol of the local inhabitants including artisans, fisher folk, and all others who know anything about the game. To them he is "our Johnnie Ball," the Johnnie Ball who has won more championships than anyone else, and old and young took holidays to follow him round in the Championship. In their hundreds they trooped after him over the course, mothers and fathers dragging their children with them,

Ball v. Douglas.

By E. W. E. Holderness.

Sir Ernest Holderness, Bt., the winner of the Amateur Golf Championship in 1922 and 1924, here recalls the match between Mr. John Ball and Mr. J. Douglas, a local hero and a great veteran against a young, foreign invader, in the Amateur Championship at Hoylake in 1921.

(Other gleanings from the memories of Sir Ernest Holderness, entitled respectively Tolley v. Gardner, Sweetser v. Brownlow and Harris v. Layton, appeared respectively in our issues of January 29th, February 5th and February 26th last.)

a motley and most formidable defence force. As Mr. Douglas remarked cheerily to a friend before the match started, "I shall want you to bring as many people as possible to support me. I guess I shall need them in case by any chance I should happen to beat Mr. John Ball."

It was, I believe, Mr. Douglas's first experience of a championship, but despite this fact he had been playing very fine golf and had been averaging "fours" for some of his earlier rounds, in which he had beaten good players. He played indeed very well against Mr. Ball under circumstances which were far from easy, and when he stood on the tee of the 16th hole, the long hole over the corner of the field which is treated as out-of-bounds, he had a lead of one hole. To the 16th hole he hit a fine drive down the left of the course: Mr. Ball sliced out of bounds, and his second shot went in the same direction, but came to rest, as was afterwards discovered, in a gully beside the narrow sand bunker which skirts the out-of-bounds territory, from which it is separated by a low grass embankment. At Hoylake the penalty for out-of-bounds is only loss of distance without loss of stroke, but in spite of this it looked as if Mr. Douglas was certain to become dormy 2 up, as Mr. Ball's second shot had appeared to go into the bunker.

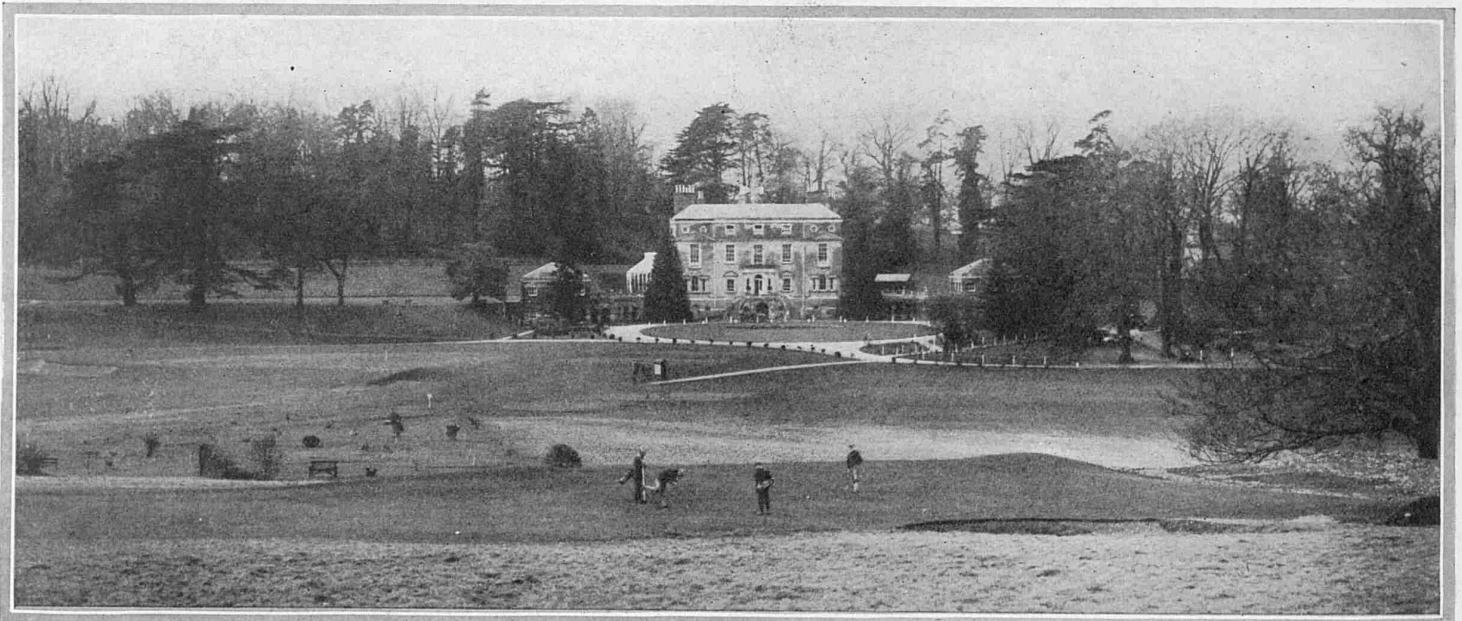
Mr. Ball's lie in the gully was not an attractive place, and had he been made to play the ball out or had he had to drop out under penalty he would certainly have lost the hole. He did not know, however, what rule applied, and he asked the referee what he ought to do. The point was not an easy one to decide, as the gully lay alongside the bunker; after considering it the referee came to the conclusion that the gully should be treated as being there for the up-keep of the course, and Mr. Ball was in consequence entitled to lift out and drop behind

it on the grass clear of the bunker without penalty. Before deciding, however, he called up Mr. Douglas, who was standing by his ball on the other side of the course, oblivious of the difficulty which had arisen, and asked him whether he had any objection to the decision which he proposed to give. Mr. Douglas had, naturally, nothing to say, because he did not know what rule applied in the case, but he was much discomfited by the sudden intelligence that Mr. Ball could lift out of the place where he lay and drop clear without penalty. No doubt he had thought that Mr. Ball was in the bunker, as when seen from the tee his ball had appeared to enter it, and he reckoned that when Mr. Ball had got out he would be playing four, and probably could not reach the green.

But when Mr. Ball was allowed to lift and drop without penalty, it meant that he could reach the green in four, and might even get a five if he holed a putt. The best that Mr. Douglas could hope for was to get a five, as the green was out of reach for two shots, and instead of having an easy win he would now have to work hard if he was to make sure of becoming dormy two. The sudden turn of events and the fact that he was called away from his ball when he was concentrating on the next shot which he had to play proved altogether too much for Mr. Douglas. At the best of times golf is a cold-blooded game, but in the middle of a most exciting contest, when events turn on the roll of the ball, and one has every reason to believe that one is about to win, it is a terrible strain on the balance of the mind to receive a staggering blow such as Mr. Douglas received. How could Mr. Douglas be expected, after a full five minutes' contemplation of what had occurred, to go on playing his game with undisturbed equanimity. The veteran golfer may regard these changes of fortune with a stolid and philosophic acquiescence which is proof against every calamity, but such a stoic indifference to fate cannot be expected of a youth new to championships.

"As high as we have mounted in delight,
In our dejection do we sink as low."

Mr. Douglas fell. He took seven to the hole and lost it. Instead of being dormy two he found himself all square. Notwithstanding this, he fought on heroically, and carried the match to the nineteenth green, where, amidst great jubilation from the Hoylake crowd, he succumbed at last to their beloved idol. It was a match which any satirist could cite in order to point a moral and adorn a tale.



A MEETING ON THE R.A.C. COUNTRY CLUB'S GOLF COURSE AT EPSOM: THE GUILDFORD AND DISTRICT ALLIANCE.

The Guildford and District Alliance meeting was held the other day on the course at Woodcote Park, when W. M. Watt (+2), the local professional, won the Bogey Competition under handicap with 4 up. Our picture shows the representatives from Burhill on the 9th green, with the clubhouse in background.