

THE COMPLETE GOLFER

By Harry Vardon. Concluding Notice. By Hon. R. Stanley Weir.

Vardon has an entertaining chapter on "Golf in America," and describes his famous tour of 1900. He declares that he was not surprised at the victory of Mr. Travis in 1904, and remembers playing with him five years ago. At that time he formed a high opinion of Mr. Travis' capabilities, and when he heard that the American amateur was going to Sandwich made him his "tip" for premier honors. "I saw him play on that memorable occasion, which will never be forgotten as long as any of the events of golfing history are remembered, and, in opposition to the opinions of other British critics expressed in many columns of print during the weeks following, it was and is my absolute conviction that his was the best golf played in that tournament, and that he thoroughly deserved to win." Incidentally, Vardon bids the British amateur wake up, being of opinion that British amateur golf has fallen off since the days when Freddy Tait, Ball, and Hilton were in their prime. He warns his compatriots that another American invasion may mean another British defeat.

Vardon has written an interesting chapter upon his experiences in America in 1900 and has a higher opinion of both the present and future of golf on this continent than is commonly held, as he remarks, by many eminent players in Britain. It is interesting to note that he formed, when here, a flattering opinion of Mr. Travis' skill as a golfer, having played against him once or twice, and when Mr. Travis went to Sandwich to com-

pete for premier honors, Vardon reports that he made a prediction to many friends in the following terms: "Mark my words; if Travis gets anything like a fairly easy draw to start with he will go right through."

"I saw him play on this memorable occasion," continues Vardon, "which will never be forgotten as long as any of the events of golfing history are remembered, and, in opposition to the opinions of British critics expressed in many columns during the weeks following, it was and is my absolute conviction that his was the best golf played in that tournament and that he thoroughly deserved to win."

Such an opinion ought to be conclusive as to the merits of Mr. Travis' game at Sandwich in 1904. By the way, it is relevant to the famous American victory to mention that in Vardon's judgment the Sandwich links is the best to be found anywhere. The carries required are long, but not too long; the greens are good and well guarded; a foozled shot calls for exceptional skill in recovering, and good strokes are never punished.

The second place among the courses or links, Vardon would give to Prestwick, with its Himalayas and Alps. Hoylake is a good course, but with a few quite tame holes. Muirfield is good, but is on the flat side and lacks sand holes. St. Andrews is good in general, but its bunkers are badly placed; they punish the man who is driving well more than the man who is driving badly, for they are often placed at the length of a good drive. The eleventh hole, how-

ever, Vardon pronounces the best one shot hole to be found anywhere. Not the least profitable part of Vardon's book is that included in the chapter entitled "Some General Hints." Here is excellent advice and comment upon the ethics and etiquette of the game and much excellent practical advice. It may be of interest to many to learn that Vardon prefers the spliced or scared club to the socket ones; that he always uses braces in preference to a belt. When a man plays in a belt he has an unaccustomed sense of looseness. For a similar reason Vardon does not advise a golfer to play without his coat even on the warmest day, if he wants to play his best game. The reader will find himself greatly entertained by the exceedingly practical and valuable advice given under this caption, and, similarly, will find the talk about "Caddies" uncommonly good. One of the best of the stories is of a caddie who was taking especial pains in cleaning his master's clubs. "What 're ve doin' cleanin' them clubs so grand?" enquired a comrade. The caddie was the regular attendant of an old golfer who had had a most disastrous day, and this was how he divulged the bitter truth. "I'm to clean 'em better than ever," said he. "And when I've cleaned 'em I've got to break 'em

across my knee. And then I've got to chuck 'em in the bloomin' river."

In concluding this brief survey of Vardon's book we can sincerely pronounce it as probably the best all-round golfing manual that has yet appeared. It possesses the immense advantage of being thoroughly suffused by a thoroughly candid and natural spirit. Here are no cold artificial rules for playing the game, but an enthusiastic, practical and personal exposition of it. Something there seems to be in the royal and ancient game that brings out much that is most attractive in human nature. Everybody will think more highly of the modest but super-excellent golfer who visited us five years ago after reading these engaging pages. That Vardon has abated nothing in his love of the game is very evident from many a line in his book, and not less evident from his concluding words written in the spring of the year: "What anticipation is more gloriously joyful than that of the man who handles his driver on the first tee on a bright morning of the springtime! He has all the round, and all the day, and all the spring and summer and autumn before him. And at this moment another spring is breaking brightly, and the golf that is before us promises to be as momentous and soul-satisfying as any that has gone before."

