

ENGLISH CRITIC AGHAST.

Ouimet Win? Impossible—But He Has to Admit It Is an Amazing Fact
By HENRY LEACH.

BROOKLINE, Mass., Sept. 20.—American golfers are telling me that Mr. Francis Ouimet has won the national open golf championship of the United States! That is nonsense; such a thing was impossible in the circumstances. Consider the facts for a moment and you will understand that you must be mistaken.

This event, which was concluded on the fine course of the Country Club at Brookline here to-day was not a mere State championship, and it was not a limited amateur championship either. It was the big wide open championship of the second greatest golfing country on earth. Then again it was not restricted to your own people. Canadians and Frenchmen played, but, greater than they are, Harry Vardon, five times open champion of Great Britain and the world (once American champion, too,) and the finest, most splendid player who has ever hit a ball since this marvellous game was mysteriously shaped from chaos, was one of the competitors. Edward Ray, open champion of Great Britain and of the world last year, who can drive a ball farther than any other man alive, was another.

How could your Francis Ouimet beat these men? It is not that he is an American. Great things in golf have come out of the United States, and will come again. But this Ouimet is an amateur, and it has become a settled principle at home that no amateur possibly can beat the best of the professionals. Then, again, these great British players are in the prime of their golfing lives—one just past 40, one under-ripe in experience, judgment, skill. Nobody can beat them. Francis Ouimet was only 20 years of age on May 8 last—a youth, a boy. You tell me that a child like this, scarcely blooded to the game, has beaten our Vardon and our Ray for a real championship!

Britons Falter in Their Game.

Again he practically, but not actually, beat them yesterday when they faltered a little in their game. Even a great man champion does not do things like that two days in succession, much less a little Ouimet. The conditions also—a heavy, sodden course, a drizzling, depressing rain—made the game harder than ever to play, and no fluke victories could be accomplished. How, then, could Mr. Ouimet win? It is absurd. When we have discovered perpetual motion, when we each possess a philosopher's stone, when we know the secrets of life after death, and when we may go for week-end golfing trips to Jupiter and Mars I will perhaps believe that your little Ouimet has won to-day.

Yes, I was there. I saw every stroke that was played. I wrote down the figures and the facts, and they seem to show that Ouimet won. I heard Harry Vardon and Edward Ray say they had done their best and could not help it, and that the best man had fairly and squarely won. I saw an American golfing crowd delirious with delight, chattering and cheering, and nearly pulling that boy Ouimet to pieces in their joy, and they were shouting, shrieking "Ouimet is champion!" But there is some mistake about all this business. The weather has been very abnormal. This has been a week of high tension and straining nerves. We are all a little tired, and probably there is a mist upon our minds and fancies float in it as if they were facts. Ouimet cannot have won. Harry Vardon was the victor; if not he, then it was Edward Ray. Nothing else was possible in such a three-cornered stroke play contest as took place over eighteen holes on this dripping course at Brookline this morning.

But you have been very kind to British golfers, and to humor you I will treat your idea as if it were the truth, as if all I really saw with my own eyes were fact, indeed. Perhaps in a few days when I have sailed back across the Atlantic I may even believe it myself. The British public may believe it. You also, and Vardon and Ray may believe it. Some of you do so now. But we will pretend.

Then this was the greatest day in all golf history. There will never be another like it. There cannot be. Only four Englishmen besides myself, including the players, who crossed the water for this great event have seen it, and when we are old men little golfing children will ask us to tell them again the romantic story of the Twentieth of September in 1913. Yes, I will say, Vardon and Ray, after their experiences of the day before, did not regard young Ouimet indifferently. They thought they would win, must win, two to one as they were, but they would play their best and safest. This had to be a testing round of safety. No man could afford to be bunkered. He must play the bold game, indeed, but he must be mighty cautious. Then the putting must be sure. If some long ones went down, well and good; by such gifts from the gods the championship might be won. But there must be no three putts on any green. Above all, the nerves must stand the most fearful strain right up to the

end; he who faltered for one moment would be lost.

Golf's Greatest Day.

These being the essentials for success, what happened to the men in their play? The first thing we discovered was that Ouimet's nerves were not damaged after the ordeal of the day before. He opened his display with as much coolness and composure as if he were out for a little exercise and practice. He was not awe-stricken or nerve-shaken. He could and did play his game to the full from the beginning, and American golfing stock rose several points. At the first hole he banged away for very considerable carry over the slimy, puddly race track that Vardon from slightly longer range had refused to attempt—and he succeeded. The three of them took that hole in five, and they were equal again at the next; but Ray, having had to play his long second from a bank at the third hole, dropped a point behind the other two. Then at the uphill sixth Vardon got the better of some pretty approaching and led Ouimet by a stroke, but the boy recovered it with a masterly approach at the eighth, and at the turn all the three were level.

Now at the tenth loose putting by our men let Ouimet in to lead them both and he never lost his lead. The end was coming fast, the holes were being eaten up, and at last Vardon and Ray began to fear their fate. I know they did. The boy would not budge. He would not get bunkered; he would not drive off the line; he would never putt three times on one green. He committed none of these faults at any time in the round.

His long putts were knocking at the door all the time. At the lengthy twelfth he gained another point on Vardon. I knew that something would happen soon after that, and at the fourteenth I saw with dismay that the British game was breaking up, for Vardon went into the rough from the tee and Ray took to the woods with his second. Here the boy topped his second—this and an out-of-bounds at the fifth being his only bad shots in the round—but he got his five for all that.

Where Ray Was "Killed."

The fifteenth virtually killed Ray, for he was the first man of the three to get bunkered, and it took him two to get out, Vardon hung on desperately, waiting for Ouimet to blunder or come by an accident, for no fine play on his own part could save him now. But at the seventeenth Vardon himself was trapped, and then with dramatic suddenness, almost stupefying us like a flash of lightning across our eyes, the boy holed a long putt, gained two strokes at one hole, and made the playing of the eighteenth a mere formality.

He beat our men at everything, I have the figures before me—Ouimet, 72; Vardon, 77; Ray, 78—and yet I cannot realize it. Vardon and Ray could not hold out against the Massachusetts wonder. They have generally done the last nine holes at Brookline better than the first nine; but they could not keep up the pace that Ouimet set them.

There is not a gofer in the world—there has never been one—who could have beaten that boy to-day. I do not know what will become of him if he is like this at twenty.

I remember that many years ago, when one of our most beloved amateurs—the great Lieut. Fred Tait, who was killed in the South African war—was at the height of his greatness and his fame, he went to North Berwick to play one of the most celebrated professionals on his own course, and he won nearly every hole. "Beaten like this by an amateur on my own course!" exclaimed Ben Sayres, the victim, in his chagrin. "It's no' possible; but it's a fact!"

And so, having reflected on this dream story of the dripping Brookline, I suggest to you, Americans, that it is very interesting, but quite impossible. Can it really be fact?

I am beginning to understand, Ouimet, you are magnificent! You deserve it all. Vardon and Ray and this English critic agree on that. And you have done a fine thing for golf.

USED TO BE A CADDY.

New Champion Carried Bags of Clubs Around Brookline Course.

Francis Ouimet, the new champion, is 20 years old, and was virtually brought up on the golf links. He was born in Brookline, his father's home being close to the links, just across the road from

the eighth hole. His parents are French Canadians.

When a mere lad, he was a caddy at the Country Club in Brookline, where he carried bags of clubs around the links day after day and saw good golf and bad golf. He remembered much of the good golf he saw, evidently. Ouimet attended the Brookline High School and it was as a schoolboy golfer around Boston that he first attracted attention. For a boy, he played a pretty good game and more than one veteran who saw him remarked that the frail, quiet-mannered youth would some day be heard from.

After graduating from High School, Ouimet went to work as a clerk in a sporting goods house in Boston. He joined the Woodlawn Golf Club of Auburndale. He didn't get a chance to play much, only on Saturdays and Sundays, and his first performance that attracted attention was the winning of the Massachusetts State title this Summer.

As a caddy, Ouimet knew the Brookline course well and was one of those wise youngsters who could tell a player where to avoid the "rough" and the hazards. But as a player, he did not know the course so well, as most of his playing has been done on his home course at Auburndale.

Ouimet is a sparsely built youth, about 5 feet 10 inches tall. He is modest and doesn't talk much. He has an easy, beautiful style of play, drives a long ball, and is an accurate putter. And, best of all, Ouimet is cool and doesn't get excited. He plays as steadily when he's losing as when he is winning. Bad "lies" and bunkers do not rattle him, and when he is behind he can play uphill just as well as he can hold his steady style when in the lead.