

**FIFTY  
YEARS OF GOLF**

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Fifty years of golf by Horace G. Hutchinson

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**HORACE G. HUTCHINSON**

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YEARS OF GOLF**



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The writer, the first English Captain of the Royal and Ancient, buying back, according to custom, the ball struck off to win the Captaincy.

# FIFTY YEARS OF GOLF

By

HORACE G. HUTCHINSON

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## PREFACE

*(Written in 1914)*

I AGREED to the suggestion that I should write these reminiscences, mainly because it seems to me that circumstances have thrown my life along such lines that I really have been more than any other man at the centre of the growth of golf—a growth out of nothingness in England, and of relative littleness in Scotland, fifty years ago, to its present condition of a fact of real national importance. I saw all the beginnings, at Westward Ho! of the new life of English golf. I followed its movement at Hoylake and later at Sandwich. I was on the Committee initiating the Amateur Championship, the International Match, the Rules of Golf Committee and so on. I have been Captain in succession of the Royal North Devon, Royal Liverpool, Royal St. George's and Royal and Ancient Clubs, as well as many others, and in these offices have been not only able but even obliged to follow closely every step in the popular advancement of the game. I do not mention these honours vaingloriously, but only by way of showing that no one else perhaps has had quite the same opportunities.

Possibly I should explain, too, the apparent magniloquence of the phrase describing golf as a "fact of real national importance." I do not think it is an

over-statement. I use it irrespective of the intrinsic merits of the game, as such. When we consider the amount of healthy exercise that it gives to all ages and sexes, the amount of money annually expended on it, the area of land (in many places otherwise valueless) that is devoted to it, the accession in house and land values for which it is responsible, the miles of railway and motor travel of which it is the reason, the extent of house building of which it has been the cause, and the amount of employment which it affords—when these and other incidental features are totalled up, it will be found, I think, that there is no extravagance at all in speaking of the golf of the present day as an item of national importance. At least, if golf be not so, it is difficult to know what is.

It is because I have in my head the material for the telling of the history of this rise of golf to its present status that I have ventured to write these personal reminiscences, and underlying them all has been the sense that I was telling the story of the coming of golf, as well as narrating tales of the great matches and the humorous incidents that I have seen and taken part in by the way.

## POSTSCRIPT TO PREFACE

*(Written in 1919)*

Reading the above "foreword," and also the pages which follow it, after the immense chasm cleft in our lives and habits by the War, I find little to modify as a result of the delay in publication. What does strike me with something very like a thrill of terror is the appalling egotism of the whole. I can truly say that I feel guiltily aware and ashamed of it. I cannot, however, say that I see my way clear to amend it. If one is rash enough to engage in the gentle pastime of personal reminiscence at all, it is difficult to play it without using the capital "I" for almost every tee shot. I will ask pardon for my presumption in plucking a passage from one of the world's great classics, to adorn so slight a theme as this, and will conclude in the words of Michael, Lord of Montaigne :—  
"Thus, gentle Reader, myselfe am the groundworke of my booke: it is then no reason thou shouldst employe thy time about so frivolous and vaine a subject."\*

\* *Montaigne's Essays*, Florio's translation.