

GOLF

BY VERDANT GREENE

Although still a far cry, golfers of vision forecast the day when clubs maintaining two, three or more courses will be required to pay for national membership in proportion to the number of links they keep in commission. For instance, Merion, Palm Beach, Baltusrol and other two-course organizations, may be asked to pay more than clubs with only one course, although the amount is not likely to be doubled. In the same way, Olympia Fields of Chicago and Pinehurst, it is argued, should contribute pro rata. At the rate the last named resort is growing no one can tell where it will stop, and with such a plan in force as herefore-casted, it would soon lead the entire country on the basis of dues paid. Naturally the instant such an arrangement is proposed it will be urged that clubs should be given a plurality of votes in exact proportion to the amount of dues paid, a suggestion certain to arouse objection, despite its reasonableness.

Yet the national association has always exacted dues based on the voting privilege, in its sharp line of demarcation between the active and allied classes. This year a country wide vote is to be taken as to merging both memberships with a rate of dues mid-way between the two. A great deal depends upon the result—in fact the entire future of the United States and Western Associations. In case such merger does not prevail it seems likely that a European plan as popularized by hotels will be put in force. That is, payment will be asked in exact proportion to services received. The number of courses reflects pretty accurately the membership and popularity of clubs and it is felt levies for national or sectional treasuries should eventually be upon the basis of man power, such as the state tax for automobiles is proportioned upon horse power. Some students of the situation go so far as to predict the day is not far distant when nine hole courses will not be asked upon to pay as much as those of eighteen holes.

Wide-awake golfers are not unmindful of the bill to curb billiards, about to be introduced in the New York legislature, with the backing of the State Civic League. It limits the hours of pool and billiard rooms, prohibits curtains and screens, and contains severe provisions against games for stakes. Of course, all out-doors is not as easy to regulate, but there are the indoor schools, and in view of the blue law trend golfers feel uneasy over such an entering wedge. A year ago, the United States Association officially frowned upon gambling in the sport and the open selling of pools, which reached high water mark in 1919 was eliminated the first evening of the national amateur championship. Inasmuch as the crowd at Roslyn was broken up into fragments among North Shore clubs on Long Island, it was comparatively easy to compass that end last fall, but it would have been almost impossible had the contestants been bunched as they were at Ekwanok in 1914. However, at some of last season's more important tournaments, notably one in Westchester County, New York, the money changers again held the center of the stage, the

night before match play started. Turning grill rooms into auction marts was so exciting for a few years as to prove a great feature and had reached a point where women spectators and bidders were almost as numerous as men, but no close observers can doubt that the practice was growing more and more harmful although it afforded wonderful side-lights upon the competitors. The climax was probably brought by active participation in the auctioneering of well-known westerners who have been officials of both National and Western Associations.

Unfortunately, prohibiting all such bidding works exactly as do the bone dry laws—the wealthy can still indulge themselves, although less openly it is true, while the poor or average man finds himself placed outside the pale. Reformers do not hesitate to declare it is such that need protection most, although in the eye of the law the possession of property establishes no class distinction.

According to deductions from the 1920 census, made public this week, the center of population in the United States has moved 9.8 miles westward in a decade. Westward, following the star of empire, the big golf championships wend their way simultaneously. The Trans-Mississippi amateur goes to Denver for the first time in eleven years, while the National, being awarded to St. Louis, alights beyond the Mississippi for the first time, if only by half a dozen miles. Epoch marking is the decision of the Canadian Association to carry the Dominion amateur event to Winnipeg, Manitoba, a step regarded as inevitable for two years past.

Although word was last week sent out from Washington with a flourish of trumpets by a news association that Edward Ray would return to defend his title, no such assurance has reached national executives who would naturally be among the first appraised. The same story included at least one piece of misinformation to the effect that Vardon and Ray had described the Columbia links as the "leading course of America." Fortunately the ocean rolls between, so neither pro will be called upon to make denial. The Columbia course will compare favorably with any over which that fixture has yet been held and the most successful of all the series of United States open contests seems assured, so misleading publicity cannot be too strongly disparaged.

What with David Black holding the Northwest open title and John Black, his brother, the open championships both of northern and southern California, the Pacific slope outlook appears to be dark for professionals outside that family.

Julian T. Bishop, a few years ago on the Yale team, send me a score made last season by George Rotan, the Texan star, in playing with him at the National course, Southampton. Rotan, thanks to Birdie 3's on the 15th and 17th and a 4 against par 5 on the last hole, came home in par 36, but needed 42 out against the strict 37, due mainly to a 7 against the allowance of 5 at the 7th hole. Bishop who isn't much of a slouch himself, although not able to regain his collegiate paces, was 86 to Rotan's 78, shaving par only at the home hole.

While Rotan is the best known among Texans in the North, the Lone Star State has a lot of promising golfing timber. Last spring there was a Dallas player at Atlantic City who entered for the tournament there but finally decided to confine himself to friendly matches in the wake of other contestants, where he created a mild sensation. He weighs about 300 pounds but doesn't look it, inasmuch as he is seven feet tall. When he drove he seemed to merely tap the ball, yet it sailed away regularly as if impelled by a cyclops. Although spectators implored him to soak the ball just for their personal gratification he could not be induced to pander to their idle curiosity. Incidentally he did say something about balls being too expensive now-a-days to knock their covers off at the first fell swoop.

The fine showing of Jack Burke, last season in the national open and of Ned Allis in the national amateur was no stroke of luck as realized at the time by close observers. Burke won the Minnesota open title for the second time soon after and Allis after being in the doldrums two or three seasons ended third in the Wisconsin professional event.

THE VERSE HARDING KISSED

WASHINGTON, (United Press.)—President Harding introduced an innovation in inaugural ceremonies today, when he kissed a verse in the Bible selected beforehand. The custom has been for the Bible to be opened at random, and for the new president to kiss its pages without knowing what verse his lips touched.

Some time ago, however, Harding made known his desire to have the Bible belonging to George Washington used, and selected the eighth verse of the sixth chapter of Micah to kiss. This verse reads:

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God."

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