

he had only arrived on the ground ten minutes before his name was called, that he had just once played over the Hoylake course, some years before, and that he did not remember it very well. His play proved all he had said, and, needless to say, he was not within sight of qualifying. And yet this player, who lived in a neighbouring county, thought himself justified, without any practice, in aspiring to the open championship of the world. Alex. Smith, the open champion of America, found he had too little knowledge of the course and of the greens, after a week's play, and Alex. Smith could comfortably give a third to the player in question.

## GOLF CAUSERIE.

### Holiday Resorts.

At Hoylake last week a little knot of not more than a score of people were giving their patronage to one of the minor matches in the championship contest. In this small crowd two men, evidently Liverpool merchants, discussed between holes where they should spend their holidays during the season already almost upon us. It was obvious that both were golfers, as were also the members of their families. A certain Irish golf course was named, but both agreed that the excessive rainfall was a serious objection. One of the two then suggested a small, though well-known golfing resort on the north-east of Scotland, but the other immediately replied, "Oh! they have to use the ballot there. We were there three years ago, and had to wait at the tee for an hour sometimes." Of course, it is this hour's wait at the tee that annoys, and so long as people breakfast at the same hour and lunch at the same hour they will be also found directing their steps towards the links at pretty much the same hour, so that, in the absence of the ballot, the starting sheet or some of the other so-called modern abominations for regulating the play, congestion at the first tee is bound to ensue. What the two gentlemen at Hoylake, whose conversation obtruded itself on the ears of the straggling company, were evidently in search of was a decent seaside links not so crowded as to necessitate the operation of the ballot or to inflict an hour's stand by the first tee. Such a place, always provided that the golf is fairly good, is not now so easily found as it used to be.

### IDEAL SPOTS "IN THE MAKING."

Fifteen years have worked a manifest change in this respect, but there are still a goodly number of ideal spots wherein to spend a leisurely golfing holiday, if only they were but known, and many more are "in the making." Of course, there are two kinds of holiday-makers—the tolerably idle, who may be said to be holidaying from one end of the year to the other, and who would regard a place like North Berwick or Cromer as comparatively quiet if not "slow," but sufficiently attractive for a month's stay on account of the excellence of the golf to be obtained. To such the ballot, the starting tube, or the draw sheet "don't matter"—it is part of the game. Then there are those who, in consequence of the strenuous business life they lead, require a holiday for the restoration of energy, and it is of these we are at the moment more particularly thinking.

To exchange the crowded city for the equally crowded seaside is to many poor compensation, and men who have worked hard for months on end do not see much fun in having to struggle for their amusements also. But that is what it comes to very often.

### NORTHWARD HO!

No wonder, then, the cry of the holiday seeker is "Northward Ho!" and that the various golfing greens of the extreme North of Scotland are becoming better known and more highly appreciated. One of these, which has existed for a number of years, and is now only beginning to attract the attention it deserves, is that of Tain, in Ross-shire. The picturesque little town of Tain is situated on a steep terrace overlooking the Dornoch Firth—a branch of the Moray Firth, made famous during the past year for the international dispute with Norway in connection with the fishery trawling question. The hills behind Tain rise to 1,000 feet, and the town itself is prettily set "between the heather and the sea." The golf course lies on the south-east shore of the Dornoch Firth, and is right opposite the classic links of Dornoch. Although separated only by the waters of the Firth—a distance of three miles as the crow flies—yet the train journey to Tain is shorter by two hours than that to Dornoch. The course was laid out so long ago as 1890, by Old Tom Morris, and it is but a few minutes' walk from the town. It is not an excessively long course, and at certain periods a thickish coat of grass is thrown up, considering its proximity to the sea, but this is all in favour of the putting greens, which, without exception, are excellent, and as Nature made them. I remember engaging in a four-ball match there three or four years ago with Mr. R. H. de Montmorency against Mr. A. Clive Lawrence and Mr. Alexander Gillon, and so fine were the greens that over the day's play, which consisted of thirty-six holes, only two putts of under six feet were missed.

### NATURAL COURSE.

It is a purely natural course, and narrow, thus demanding accurate long play. It is a somewhat odd coincidence that its greatest blemish from a critical point of view is precisely the same as that which has been levelled against its more famous rival on the other side of the water, Dornoch, namely, that the two last holes are short—both being one-shot holes. But to urge this point unduly would be to border the hypercritical. Suffice it to say that in both cases the finishing holes are most excellent tests of the game. For the most part the Tain holes are of varied character, the ground being undulating, and throughout the green is to be found that diversity which is the golfer's best source of enjoyment and the greatest test of his skill. The course of recent years has become very popular with the officers of the Channel Fleet and Home Squadron when stationed at Invergordon and Cromarty.

### ADVANTAGES AND ATTRACTIONS.

The charges are little more than nominal—3s. 6d. weekly, and 1s. daily. Tain has many other attractions for the holiday-maker. Its situation, surroundings, and historical associations all render it an ideal holiday resort. It is said that an American gentleman recently passing through by train remarked to a native, "This looks an ancient place." "Oh, yes," replied the native, "our town has a charter signed by King David." "Great guns," retorted the Yankee, "that was the man who wrote the Psalms, wasn't it?"

The gas, and water, and drainage supplies are all that can be desired, and, according to the tables of the Meteorological Office, the rainfall is but 24 inches, as compared with 70 in Skye, 50 in Oban, and 30 in Edinburgh.

Tain lies forty-four miles north of Inverness, and the traveller who leaves King's Cross or Euston at 8.15 p.m. reaches Tain at 11.30 a.m. next day. Inquiries for house and hotel accommodation may be addressed to the Secretary of the Golf Club.

J. S.