

# The Great Quoicher

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Golf belongs to Scotland. Yet from the French Flanders there comes an account of a bastard species of golf in an old book by Charles Deulin named "Les Contes du Roi Cambrinus." The spirit of this tale is in true golf tradition and suggests a kinship with the game as it has developed in Scotland and America.

Once upon a time, the story goes, there was a wheelwright named Roger who was so great a golfer that no one in the countryside could equal or beat him, and all bowed before him as The Great Quoicher (one who is always holing out, from the Scottish word "quoich" meaning "hole," or "cup").

Like many a modern player he laid his success to a favorite club, and as Bob Jones had Calamity Jane so Roger had his trusty darach, or forked oak stick, acquired in a curious way.

One day as he worked at his forge, a wayfarer came asking for help. Under the shade of the towering darach tree at his shop door, Roger learned that his guest was the famous Saint Anthony, patron of those suffering from erysipelas, or Saint Anthony's fire. Saint Anthony

was in need of a darach tree 12 fathoms high and flourishing near a smithy's fire to rekindle his own flames with which he combated the dreaded disease.

Quickly Roger felled the huge tree, leaving only the ugly stump at his door. In gratitude, the great Saint Anthony granted him three favors. All who sat on the stump of the darach tree must stay there unmoving until Roger willed that they should leave, and any who stood on the door mat from which Saint Anthony had made his plea could not be moved without his own desire. And finally, whacking off a forked stick from the fallen tree, the Saint said to Roger, "Play your game with this darach stick, and you can never be a loser."

Roger prospered. Creditors paid their just bills rather than sit forever on the stump outside the smithy's door. And no one could beat him on the golf course.

Finally Death came to claim Roger. The wily golfer persuaded him to rest a moment on the old darach stump outside the shop before starting on the arduous trip. So Roger bargained for another 100 years of life. And again Roger beat all who were reckless enough to try their skill against his, and his golf cry of "Quoich," or "In the cup," became a symbol of his certain victories.

At last it was time for Death to return and Roger was carried below. The Devil refused to accept him. "He has already won a sack full of souls from me," he said. "If I let him in here, he will win everyone from me."

The gates of Heaven were ready to close on him, but Roger finally persuaded Saint Peter to let him have a word with his old friend, the great Saint Anthony. Once inside the gates, Roger unrolled his bit of door mat and seated himself on it. And there he sits to this day, since no one can force him to move.



• From "Golfing" by Horace Hutchinson, Printed in London, 1898.