

EIGHTY-SEVEN DIFFERENT STYLES

HARRY FULFORD PRACTICES PUTTING.

I have been spending two solid hours trying to learn to putt; endeavoring to ascertain whether I possess an optic nerve that will explain why I have been a pessimistic putter from my youth up. My reason for thus wasting time was that I suddenly remembered having read somewhere that Mayo practices one hour per day. "Surely," I thought,

"IF CHARLES IS SO GIFTED WITH
PATIENCE,

I also can summon up a trifle." Again, I had just lost a game to one whom I had foolishly looked upon as a rabbit, and who, rabbit-like, had a gift of holing out from most places. This sort of thing, when one can drive the head off him, is paralyzing, is annoying, is absurd, is—well, it's not right; and, therefore, taking with me three putters and six balls, I sought a secluded green. Everything that I have read *re* the correct method of putting I remembered; the stance of every good putter I had seen I could visualise, and the first person whose style I adopted was McDermott. Now, he *can* putt, so I kept my heels together, stood up to the ball and swung the club with a pendulum-like movement.

AFTER TEN MINUTES OF M'DERMOTTISM, I came to the conclusion that without chewing gum this style was a failure, for the result was no better than usual. Next I essayed the Vardon methods. I say "methods," for poor Harry once informed me that he is the possessor of eighty-six different methods of missing a "yarder." Well, I can beat that, for I've eighty-seven; however, I soon found out that Vardonistic putting is

a deadsure optic nerve originator, for I got pains in both knees, lumbago (due to crouching), and very nearly brain fever (blood rushing to head owing to bending). At this stage I changed the club. "A new broom," I told myself, "sweepeth clean"; in fact,

IT BRISTLES WITH PROMISE.

It did, for I endeavored to copy the stance (left foot advanced, knees rigid) of a friend of mine, who certainly putts well, but must be possessed of an eye that defies direction, for I found that I could hook 'em a yard in three. Reversing this stance (right forward, knees flabby), I pushed 'em, and had to aim for a slice. Up to now the only ball that had disappeared was one that I knocked carelessly back across the green. It caught in the hole and stopped there. However, I had still a dozen of methods to adopt. Ray, when on his putting, is very good. I know how he does it, but he doesn't, and Ray's system was at once commenced. Left elbow out, stance slightly open, hands well up, eye on ball (hole quite ignored), knees wobbly, and, what I consider more important still, a short speech to the effect that if it doesn't go down,

PURPLE COMETS AND DYNAMITE

will be its lot. I have often heard Edward promise it this, with wonderful effect. All this, then, was carried out faithfully, but either my promise was not sufficiently awful, or I stiffened up a cartilage, or burst a brace or something; whatever it was, I know not, but something was wrong, for no result was forthcoming. I certainly laid it dead, but as it was a yard putt that I

was trying, I derived little satisfaction. Bear in mind that my patience was by no means exhausted. Great results are not obtained in a couple of hours, and although I hope to live to the age of eighty, I'm betting on being a good putter at seventy-nine.

Then followed a bout of long putts, say from fifteen yards. How beautifully the ball ran up to the hole;

HOW EASILY THE PUTTER SWUNG TO
AND FRO;

what a simple matter it was to lay 'em dead, for I did so repeatedly! This fact wanted reasoning out. The explanation is undoubtedly this: that in a long putt the ball has to be struck harder, the club taken back farther, and the force applied carries it forward more. You see, there is less delicacy of touch required; we don't expect to hole it, but feel quite satisfied with placing it where it can be easily missed at the next attempt. This *must* be the reason for such proficiency at fifteen yards, but one derives little satisfaction thereby. Back to the "yarder" I went, therefore, and after a few minutes found that I was holing them quite easily. Then it suddenly dawned upon me that all the time I was doing so I had been turning over in my mind the probability of Ray or Vardon winning the American Open! Now then, we get back to the statement recently made by an American, who said that he obtained

HIS BEST RESULTS WHEN NOT USING
HIS BRAINS.

I believe every word of his statement. I have always believed it. When I'm not thinking of the half-crown on the game I can play, but the sickening part of it is that when I'm playing, or rather when I'm putting, I'm always thinking of the probability of missing. I find it difficult to eliminate the matter in hand, which is an obsession responsible for all my putting troubles. I stuck it out for two hours, and the conclusion that I arrived at was this: there is no royal road to success; there is no club that will improve your putting; there are no brains necessary;

THERE IS NO CORRECT STANCE
or manner of holding the club; there is no need to stiffen the knees, or to bend them, or to crouch or stand upright, or look at the ball or the hole; no need to swing the club like a pendulum, or to jab, snatch or push it; no need to try and discover an optic nerve, for a bad putter is a mass of nerves, which might well include an optic kind. None of these things is necessary, for it is a psychological question. All that is required is to place a golf club—any sort will do—behind the ball, and when in the act of striking it offer up a short prayer to your pet ju ju. Practising putting is one of the best methods of wasting time that I know of. The person responsible is he whom the ancient Egyptians referred to as Ka, and that in English means our other self.

HARRY FULFORD.

