

# THE HUMOR OF THE GAME

By A. W. TILLINGHAST

GOLF has its comedies but often enough they are tragedies to the actors. There is no mirth in "My niblick, boy!" Those three words contain the pain of an outraged soul, but to the casual observer the sight of an angry man raging from the depths of a pit may be laughable enough.

A dozen years ago there was a course, not far from Philadelphia, at a place known as Torresdale. Several of the holes crossed an old race-track and one day, during a medal round, a certain dignified gentleman had the great misfortune to sky one of his shots into the judges' stand. It was a circular structure, boarded up from the floor to the height of a man's waist. There on the floor was the ball like a mouse in a cheese box.

With great determination the player attempted to loft it out, but his club only drove the ball violently against the sides of the stand, and around and around it tore to the consternation of the unfortunate golfer.

"There's a penalty if it hits you," shouted his companion, but this bit of useful information obviously was unnecessary for the other was exhibiting surprising agility in dodging the ball which was pursuing him around the enclosure. Each shot was equally ineffective and each time there would be the same smash of the club on the floor, the bang of the ball against the boards and the rattle and bump as it made the rounds.

Anyone who did not know what the man up in the stand was doing might have imagined that he was killing a snake or something of the sort instead of a pained golfer who was endeavoring to keep away from a vindictive ball.

Other contestants stopped to laugh; they couldn't help it, but do you suppose for a moment that the chief actor enjoyed the comedy?

I saw him the other day. He is close on to eighty years of age now, but he was playing golf. Immediately there flashed the picture of his dance in the judges' stand, years before, and the smile which it occasioned meant no disrespect to his gray head.

He was a novice and certainly Dunwoodie never had seen a worse player. His swing was weird and his shots were wild (when he did hit the ball), but he was long on enthusiasm. One fine afternoon he engaged a caddie and the divots soon were flying. His card was made up of the usual collection of double figures until finally he managed to get one squarely on the club and away it went, *straight*. This was followed by another, and although the approach putt was not fortunate, a long curler hit the back of the cup and then disappeared.

As he handed the ball to the beaming man, the caddie remarked casually,—"You got that one in Bogey," when to his great amazement his employer turned and made for the club-house as rapidly as shoe leather would carry him. Without hesitating he cranked his car and shot out for home, "Wife! Wife! I made a hole in Bogey!" he shouted as he catapulted into the house.

"What's Bogey?" was the placid and somewhat indifferent response.

Abashed and silent he stood, and he shook his head slowly. "I'm darned if I know," he said soberly, but like one inspired he added quickly—"I'll go back and find out."

And so he did.

When the Oxford-Cambridge team played at Huntingdon Valley some years ago a close match resulted when George J. Cooke met Norman Hunter. On one of the holes Cooke put his tee-shot out of bounds and absentmindedly he walked over to the sand box and prepared to tee another. Of course in those days it was necessary to meet such a situation by dropping on the teeing ground.

"George," someone remonstrated, "you must drop, you know."

In one hand Cooke had his ball and in the other, a pinch of sand.

"To be sure," he answered, and he stood erect and faced the hole, as the rules provided, and then he calmly dropped from over his shoulder not the ball—but the sand.

At times the innocent find it hard to prove their innocence. Edward Berwind Chase relates this extraordinary happening. About two years ago two friends of his were walking over a certain Long Island course. Suddenly a ball dropped close by them and they watched it take the run to the cup, and in it went. They did not see the player for the approach to the green was blind.

As they stood by the green, commenting on the wonderfully lucky happening, another ball was played to the green and *mirabile dictu*—it too holed out.

Scarcely crediting their eyes the men stood perfectly still and waited until the players appeared.

"Did you happen to see a couple of balls come over?" one asked.

"We surely did," Chase's friend replied. "You will find them both in the hole."

"Is that your idea of being funny?" the player savagely inquired. "Because if it is, it's a mighty poor joke."

## GOLF ILLUSTRATED



From Punch

*First Caddie.* "Doss IT MAKE YER DIZZY LOOKIN' DOWN THESE 'OLES ?"     *Second Caddie.* "No."  
*First Caddie.* "THEN WHY DON'T YOU GO TO THE PIN SOMETIMES?"

"But my dear sir," I assure you that we saw each ball strike, and neither my friend or myself touched them. They are in the cup where they finished."

The players regarded the two strangers narrowly. "Are you club members?" one asked.

"No, we are not."

"Then we would prefer that you do not walk over the course."

Chase says that his friend is a very dignified man, and one absolutely above reproach. The insinuation hurt him and he expostulated, "But you surely do not doubt my word! Neither of us touched the balls, nor have we moved a step since they appeared."

The two golfers, angry and unbelieving, took the balls from the cup and as they walked off one said pointedly.

"We would prefer that you do not walk over our course." To this day they probably believe that they were the victims of a hoax.

The strange incident of the two balls brings to mind another, almost as unusual. There was a certain player at Lakewood whose style was peculiar and at times he was inclined to wild play. As he was playing one day in a four-ball match he sliced badly and his ball struck a woman who chanced to be walking along the road. It struck her between the

shoulders, but fortunately it was on the bound and she was uninjured.

After profuse apologies from the offending golfer the woman walked away but crossed over to the other side of the course. Again the wretched fellow played but this time he got a terrific hook and again he winged the pedestrian.

This time she did not tarry for explanations but speedily sought the shelter of the pine woods, convinced, without a doubt, that she was the marked victim of a would-be assassin.

"The King can do no wrong," nor can a father in the eyes of his young son.

George Lyon, the noted Canadian golfer, is a prodigiously long driver, but once he found himself at odds with his wood. He was playing in a four-ball match at Lampton and with him was Fritz Martin of Hamilton, another very sturdy player. If memory serves me another of the quartette was Percy Barrett the Lampton pro!

Lyon was pressing for distance but he was "skying" nearly every shot. The gallery found it difficult to reconcile themselves to this unusual mood of the champion. The distance was not there.

Following the match was Lyon's young son. He

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watched his father proudly and after a while he could no longer control his admiration and just as a particularly lofty one at last came to earth, he clapped his hands vigorously and shouted, "Fine, daddy, fine! You're driving higher than any of 'em!"

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There was a golfer in the Metropolitan district who was a nervous, fidgety man.

In a tournament at Atlantic City he had a rather easy match in the morning and after finishing he waited for the end of the game which was to determine his opponent for the afternoon.

One of the players was L. A. Hamilton. And as he walked into the club-house he of the nerves asked Hamilton if he had played well.

"Fine! Had a 77," was the answer.

This bit of news was none too encouraging, but the remainder was worse.

"And I was 5 down, too."