

THE HUMOR OF THE GAME

By A. W. TILLINGHAST

THIS conversation was heard in the smoking car when a party of golfers were going from Philadelphia to the new course at Pine Valley. As the train neared Sumner Station, and they prepared to leave the car, they stood for a moment beside two old darkies. Said one, "Dey's makin' a mighty toney place in dar."

"Dey sho is," replied the other, "wid all dis yhere bungalum buildin'. Dey's gwine ter fix up a regular city."

"Huh!" spoke up the first, "dat ain't gwine ter be no city. Dat's a golf club, a' dey tells me dat it costs a thousand dollars fo' a appreciation fee."

This story is told by a gentleman whose wife has been striving diligently for more than a year to master the rudiments of the game. Her teacher was a profound man who advocates a very thorough course in physical culture. Before he permits his pupils to take a club in their hands, he produces a terrifying chart of the human anatomy, to thoroughly impress on their minds the location and uses of various muscles, and nerve centers.

One evening when the gentleman of this story returned home from his office, he found his wife in tears, and on being pressed for an explanation, she unburdened her woes:

"I shall never learn to play, never! I am absolutely convinced of it. I am hopeless. Every time

I take my stance and try to hit the ball, he keeps reminding me of all my muscles and tendons, and when I fail to hit it to his satisfaction, which is nearly always, he tells me that there is some cell in me which is not working."

Then a fresh torrent of tears as she sobbed, "And I don't know which cell it is."

Some instructors are inclined to be brutally frank, and not long ago one of this sort had an engagement to give a golf lesson to a gentleman whom he had never met. It so happened that the pupil was a very dignified old gentleman who had played a little golf after his own fashion.

He took his stance before the instructor who requested "that he take a shot at one" which he proceeded to do, after his usual and original manner. It must be admitted that he crouched considerably and as he prepared to strike he began throwing up the dirt with first one foot and then the other, evidently to get more firmly planted. The Pro., observing all this in wonder, ejaculated:

"Good God, man, you're not laying an egg, are you?" Whereupon the lesson came to an abrupt end.

When Ray and Vardon were over here several years ago they spent their first week at Shawnee, and one night as a party of professionals were sitting around a table in the tap room, Ted called a waiter

over and said, "I'm bloody well tired of drinking ginger ale. Bring me a horse's neck for a change."

This fall when the worms were exceedingly active and their throws cluttered the putting games, a novice happened to be playing around the course with the professional. Most of the greens had been swept, but finally they came to one which had only been partially cleaned. Observing the worm casts with great curiosity, the "tyro" inquired,

"Are those little holes the places where you put the grass seed?"

Among my notes I find this characteristic conversation of the old Scotch caddie. How long it has been there I do not know, but I give it to you as I put it down some years since.

"Ye'll mebbe no min' Robbie Gow, him 'at wis prefesshnal at Eskmooth, Robbie wis aften here pleeyin' matches an' teachin.' Him and me wis great freens an' a aye carriet till him when he wis here. He wis a fine player, nae exactly fat ye wad ca' a terrible lang driver, but he wis aye straicht, an' he wis a graun' putter. I nivir saw his like at holin' a lang curly putt. He ave carriet a black bottle o' speerits in a big pooch i' the linin' o's jeckit when he wis pleeyin,' and mony's th' sook a've had oot o't. Nae that Robbie wis ower fon' o' th' drink; a nivir seed him fou but once,—nae speechless, ye ken—but he likit a dram. A min' th' day we wis pleeyin' a foursome wi' th' Masiter o' Allardyce again Cornel Anstruther and Doactor Anderson. The Doactor wis a terrible wild pleeyer, an' gaun tae th' fifth hole he hit a maist tremendous slice that skitit richt across th' coorse an' struck Bobbie fair i' th' midriff. There wis a fearfu' clink, an' there wis Robbie caperin aboot an' pickin' th' brooken glass oot o's pooch wi' th' speerits rinnin' a'doon his breeks. It wis an awfu' waste o' guid drink, forbye costin' them th' hole, but th' Doactor gied Robbie th' price o' a new bottle when we cam' in.

"I sippose ye hevna sic a thing as a trippiny bit aboot ye? A hev'na tastit th' day, an' a could dae fine wi'a nip afore—Thank ye, sir—! Losh, there's ma mon o' th' first tee, th' noo!"

Tales of the irritability of some crochety golfers are many, and as a rule these players are unnecessarily severe and fault-finding with the small boys who carry their bags. This is a truthful account of a happening in which a very near-sighted, fidgety golf player and his caddie had the center of the stage.

For seventeen holes the patient little lad had hunted his employer's ball first in the rough on one side of the Fairway, then on the other, and of course had to shoulder the entire blame for the other's shortcomings, all of which had caused a distinct coolness to spring up between them.

In teeing off for the home hole, the old gentleman sliced atrociously and his ball found a resting place in some very thick grass. It was summer time, and there were a number of daisies growing here and there. The long suffering caddie at last managed to find the ball, which was lying not very far from one of these daisies, and standing aside, he waited for his employer to play. The defective sight mistook the daisy for the ball, and striking away with all his strength, the man with the club did no more damage than to displace an immense divot. Looking up quickly, but failing to see the effect of his shot, he turned on the boy ferociously, and this dialogue took place;

"Did you see it boy?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"It didn't go out, sir."

"What do you mean, you imp of Satan?"

"It didn't go out, sir. You didn't hit it."

"Then why in hell didn't you tell me so!"

While some may find a grain of humor in this, many may take it unto themselves as an object lesson.