

# THE HUMOR OF THE GAME

By A. W. TILLINGHAST

QUITE the most notable event of the last month in the world of golf was the dinner of the recently organized Midiron Club of Pittsburgh, Pa. The evening of banter and jest was keenly relished by the four hundred-odd golfers, who attended, and it is likely that some of the quips will be amusing to the readers of **GOLF ILLUSTRATED**.

The parodies of popular songs were exceedingly clever. Naturally "Tipperary" and "Sister Susie's Sewing Shirts for Soldiers" were prime favorites. Mr. O. D. Thompson's partiality for his heavy iron is well known, indeed he never uses wood, and one of the "Sister Susie" songs was dedicated to him:—

Allegheny's Green Committee once went nearly crazy;  
A mystery confronted them that no one could unfold,  
The course was always crowded,  
Yet some crabbed creature ploughed it,  
With ditches big and wide enough an elephant to hold.  
Until at last one said "Aha! It's not a beast at all  
It's Ollie Thompson, making sure he will not top the ball!"

Thompson thinks to top is tantalizing  
He throws his trusty ten-pound iron,  
Thumping through the earth.  
Those deep tremendous trenches  
Are not national defenses.  
But the terrifying trail that's traced  
By Thompson taking turf.

How often do we know of young golfers who are hampered by the misguided, fond, attentions of their friends and relatives. Some years ago in the National Amateur Championship, there was a sterling, young player who undoubtedly had a chance for the title. Just before his match he said—

"Father, would you mind very much if I asked you not to follow me to-day?"

"All right, my boy, I understand," but the gray-haired man wished in his heart that he might be always at hand to see every stroke. In the old days he had fought Indians but never did he "stalk" as he did that day as he dodged behind bunkers and trees, following the fortunes of his son without being seen. At times he would sneak through pits, with his field glasses focussed on the battle, and then he would dodge away to the shelter of club piazza or sheds.

The match was close and when the players came to the last hole they were on even terms. The hole was a long two-shotter and the general took his stand close by a post on the club-house veranda. After the drives he started for the shelter of the sheds again, but abruptly checking his flight, he scurried back to his post. When the third shots had been played he was panic-stricken when his boy's ball was on the far edge of the green, while the other was within reasonable putting distance. Again he started for the sheds, but making a nervous detour he circled the club-house on the run and regained his post. Climbing on the veranda rail he hugged the friendly post in desperate embrace.

What if the boy should see him? He hugged the post tightly, but as the fateful approach gathered speed and made its way toward the cup, it seemed as though it must go above it. The frantic gallery of one started to "root" for that ball to lose speed. Further and further he strained away from his moorings, balancing on the rail—then the ball found the hole and the general lost his balance and fell to the floor with a resounding thud. As always happens in such a crisis, the other missed for the half and the match was won.

The sight of the dignified army man prone on the boards surely must have brought a laugh, but to him it was serious business. Such is golf.

Here is a story related by Mr. Forgan, of Chicago. It concerns the "Skipper"—one of the most famous caddies of old St. Andrews.

Many years ago Mr. Forgan left St. Andrews, came to America and to-day he is one of Chicago's foremost bankers. After a number of years away from his native village he returned, and naturally he was eager for a round of golf on the old course. As he passed old Tom Morris' shop on his way to the first teeing ground, he passed the skipper who was waiting for his employer.

"Good afternoon, Skipper!" and Mr. Forgan's greeting was hearty enough but the old man rather resented this familiarity from a stranger, and without replying, raised his eyes and scrutinized the face of the other. Chuckling to himself, Mr. Forgan went on his way, and later passed the Skipper again. The old man peered at him, but shook his head doubtfully, turned his back and went about his business. As the round was nearing its finish, it happened that the two passed again, although many yards separated them. The Skipper walked slowly over to Mr. Forgan and after looking long and earnestly into his face he nodded and said:

"I ken ye noo." That was all.

"I surely am lucky!" The speaker leaned heavily on the chair-arms as he turned to the man seated close by. A twinge of pain fled across his face but it was followed by a contented smile. "Yes sir, I am very lucky!"

He had just returned from a fortnight's golf over a Florida course, and he had brought back with him a sun-browned face and a lame back.

"How do you figure yourself lucky?" queried his friend. "You managed to hurt your back, didn't you?"

"Surely," smiled the invalid. "But I did it driving off for the home hole on the last afternoon of my stay. It might have happened before!" And he shook his head dolefully at the very thought.

"How did you play to-day, my dear?" asked the wife of an enthusiastic novice.

"Rather well, at times," he replied proudly. "My caddie informed me that I made several of the holes in *Bogus!*"

An old Scotch caddie had just finished a round in a drenching rain. His employer, for the first time during the match, seemed conscious of the unhappy condition of the man. Looking at the dripping, muddy figure he said kindly, "Thomas, you had best hurry home and change your clothes."

"Change ma clathes?" muttered Thomas. "I've naething at hame to change wi' but a paper collar."

Travelers in Scotland are familiar with the "*Ben*" which usually is prefixed to the names of the mountains. One evening in an Edinburgh hotel a mountain climber was boasting of his feats. Recently he had climbed Ben Nevis.

"But you must not leave Scotland before you have climbed Ben Sayers," observed a listener.

"Never heard of it," said the mountaineer. "Where is it?" "North Berwick."

"North Berwick? That's not very far from here, is it? I must run down there. What is the height?"

"Nothing very great," replied the other, "but Ben Sayers is very *steep*, whatever way you take him."

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"By the way caddie, isn't that Mr. Middleton playing 'round with Major Dalrymple?"

"Dunno, sir. We calls him Snortin' Billy—he's playin' with old Cherry Nose."

The *Winnipeg Saturday Post* is responsible for the following bit—

There is an old golf-playing Colonel,  
Whose temper is simply infolonel;  
When he fozzles a putt,  
His remarks (not "Tut! Tut!")  
We never could print in this jolonel.

Topper was having an unusually bad day and the ball which he had been maltreating was in a sad condition. He took out a new one and removed its tissue wrapping, but with his next stroke he gashed it horribly, cleanly through the cover to the rubber. A short distance away its mutilated face showed through the rough.

"You've made a money-box of that one, sir," remarked his small caddie, pleasantly.

It is related that "Mark Twain" once visited an old friend of his and after ascertaining that the Senator was playing golf he walked over the course, searching for him. Finally he heard horrible language, wafted by the breeze from beyond a hillock. Clambering up he observed his friend making futile efforts to whack his ball out from the maw of a frightfully deep pit. After a while he was discovered.

"Hello, Sam!" said the Senator.

"Hello, Dante!" said Twain.

In the early days of golf, that quaint comedian, the late Dan Daly, was responsible for a description of the game, which was quoted widely by scoffers. He described the building of the tee and the drive and concluded by saying—"If you find the ball the same day—you win."

But some time since a certain good lady, who had observed some little golf, described it in this highly original manner—

"It seems to be played by two men. One is a gentleman and the other is a common man who carries the sticks. The common man sticks the ball on a lump of dirt, and the gentleman knocks it off again."

London *Golf* relates this story of a match between George Duncan and Ted Ray—

Duncan was, as usual, hitting a very long ball from the tee, but Ray's prodigious swipes made his distance look quite ordinary. This did not worry Duncan, who kept serenely hitting his seconds up to the green, but it evidently caused considerable dissatisfaction to a lady admirer of his who was following the game with great intentness. Seizing a favorable opportunity she slipped up to him and sadly remarked "Oh, Duncan, I am so sorry to see you being out-driven like this. I always thought before that you were quite a long driver!"

Many of the dour middle classes of Scotland regard the actor as an intimate ally of Beelzebub. The dourest of dour ministers

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one day was soundly beaten at golf by an athletic young stranger on the links near Falkirk. Surprised that a Sassenach should have the impertinence to beat him on his native heath, but admiring the young man's skill he asked him to the Manse for tea. He found his guest polished, well read, and interesting. Half past six brought the announcement that he "must be off to work."

"And where wull ye be working this time the day?"

"At the theater. I act."

"Act! An actor. Tae think I hae harbored a son of Satan in the hoose of God!"

Undoubtedly the worthy man expected to see a blue flame spring up for he stepped back, his hands upraised.

"Have you ever been in a theater?" asked the actor.

"The Lord forbid!"

"Then how can you know anything about it?"

The good man paused. "Weel, weel, if ye can act as weel as ye can gowf, ye canna be sic a bad man. I'm minded to come and spier at ye—I suppose ye can gie me a free ticket?"

This recalls another story of a Scotch minister who was encountered by an American golfer in Canada some years ago. Playing the home hole with the match all-even, the visitor had the misfortune to lose his ball. He searched diligently until the other, closing his watch with a resounding snap, said—

"Time's up. It's a lost ba'; ma hole and ma match. But I'm no mindin' tellin' ye, your ba's over there under yon, wee bush.