

The Start of the Back Swing

A Note on Mr. Ouimet's Recent Article

MR. FRANCIS OUIMET has contributed an interesting note on "The Start of the Back Swing" and, in his modest way, thinks what he has written will be open to criticism. But whatever so accomplished a golfer may set down as his own method cannot but be received with profound respect. There is more than a presumption that he may be right.

Mr. Ouimet does not go so far as to say that "pulling" the club-head away at the start with the fingers of the right hand, as he does it, is the *only* way to take the club back. There is much variety in golf and more than one good way of doing the same thing, while the best way for A may not be the best way for B. *Quot homines, tot sententiae*, again. Mr. Ouimet's way does not seem to be the way of Vardon or Taylor, Braid or Ray; but I believe it is the method of Alex. Smith, author of "Lessons in Golf" and sometime Open and Western Champion in this country and also the method of Arnaud Massy who was British Champion in 1907. Alex. Smith says simply: The club should be taken back by the fingers of the right hand. But Arnaud Massy in his book on "Golf" translated from the original French by A. R. Allinson and published by Methuen & Co., Ltd., has a very interesting note which I will reproduce as seeming to confirm Mr. Ouimet's theory although he does not adopt the same verbal expressions. Massy writes:

It is the left wrist that, by exerting a slight pressure, begins to move away the head of the club from the ball, while the right follows up the movement by *pulling* in the contrary direction.

Both Ouimet and Massy are conscious of this *pulling* by the right hand. Mr. Ouimet thinks that "the left wrist acts as a sort of pivot and its action is controlled or governed by the wrist of the right hand." This pivotal movement tallies exactly, I venture to think, with the method described by Massy.

The point under discussion is one of great interest. The majority of players will probably find that a dominant swing back with the left hand, the left wrist duly turning and the right duly accommodating itself, the shoulders turning also in their proper plane with acquiescing lower limbs, will suit them best. But others may find the Ouimet-Massy-Smith method the very thing they need to perfect their own otherwise fine style.

R. Stanley Weir.

A New Book

AN attractive looking book has come to us from the publishing house of Moffatt & Yard & Co. entitled, "Golf for Women." The author conceals her identity subscribing herself simply "A Woman Golfer." The book runs to 263 pages and is plentifully illustrated by photographs of the leading women players of the day, both British and American. This last includes Miss Cecilia Leitch (erroneously given in this book as Leith), Miss Muriel Dodd, Mrs. Vanderbeck, Mrs. Hurd, Mrs. Barlow and others. The book is pleasantly written and, in general, is orthodox in statement. There is a concession to modern heresy in starting with a discussion of putting followed by chapters on mashie, mid-iron, cleek, brassey and driving. This is to proceed on the utterly fallacious assumption that one learns

the use of the mashie best by learning first how to putt, that proficiency with the mashie leads to proficiency with other irons and clubs and that, finally, all this in some manner leads up to the big strokes with brassey and driver. No harm, of course, can result from beginning the game by putting so long as it is understood (and the learner will very soon find it out) that putting and driving are two different things and very remotely related.

It is unfortunate that writers on golf are frequently careless in their descriptions of golf action. The following taken from the book before us is an example of this inaccuracy. At page 226 we read:

The left shoulder must not be dropped, but must swing around parallel to the ground as the arms are drawn back. The right shoulder, as the club is on its downward journey, must not be lowered or the club-head will doubtless dig into the turf.

Even the tyro must perceive that the left shoulder cannot and must not swing round "parallel with the ground." Rather does it swing as far as it goes parallel to the arc described by the club-head. The tyro knows equally well that the right shoulder *must* lower itself, also paralleling the club.

At page 250 we read also the following very questionable and dangerous doctrine:

Too much emphasis cannot be laid upon the fact that from the top of the swing it is imperative for the body to take the lead. In order to get real power into this stroke it is necessary to draw immediately upon the strength of the body.

The writer affirms that recent cinematograph pictures have substantiated this theory. But what recent cinematographs disclose is the excellent co-ordination between the movement of the torso and the arms, a fine parallelism and nothing more. It is perfectly true, as our author affirms, that the arms of themselves can strike but a feeble blow; but this hardly justifies the somewhat sweeping claims made for body action. Upon the whole, however, women will find the volume before us entertaining and instructive although it is not likely to supersede the standard books that have been written by mere men.

R. Stanley Weir.

A Correction

To the Editor of Golf Illustrated—

Sir:—In your November issue, apropos of the new course of the Garden City Country Club, you say, "the one pleasing feature of the new links is that the holes are copies of well-known Metropolitan holes for the most part and these are named after the links from which they were chosen."

This is quite erroneous. All of the holes are entirely original creations.

Very faithfully yours,

W. J. TRAVIS.

A Letter from Salonica

This is, I am afraid, nothing so thrilling as a letter from the trenches. It is merely the letter of one working near the Salonica base at a rather pedestrian employment and in a position—touching wood—of very tolerable security. Certainly it cannot be a letter about golf and yet I saw a golf