

"AS OTHERS SEE US"

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With Illustrations by Willibd S. Barnes

Oh wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursel's as others see us!

—Robert Burns.

IT is not likely that the Scottish bard had golfing folk particularly in mind when he penned this immortal couplet, but it is certain that no maxim can be cited that more admirably expresses both the need and the proper aspirations of every ardent golfer. For many a diligent player thinks he knows what he is doing upon the links, and how he is doing it, when, as a matter of fact, his mental conception differs vastly from his actual style. He is perhaps undeceived for the moment when some coaching "pro" or friendly preceptor imitates his swing or stance with a view to illustrating his capital errors of form; but even then he cannot avoid a lurking suspicion that his actual style is being most grotesquely

exaggerated by his well-meaning instructors. But if he could only see himself as others see him, especially those whose capacity for detecting good and bad form is sound, how

much more rapid would his progress be in the difficult art of golf! To continue the citation from the poet:

It would from many an error free us,
And foolish notion.

For instance, it is not uncommon after the first two or three seasons of industrious golf to trace a grievous break-down in one's full strokes to over-swinging.

Familiarity with the clubs begets, alas! contempt of careful swinging. This, together with an increase in power and usually a somewhat relaxed left arm, induces a very full draw-back with the very fine name of a St. Andrews swing, accompanied by occasional success in distance, but also by far too common foundering, topping, and general fooling. It frequently takes a player a long time to discover, and when he does make the discovery it is with surprise, that his club has been habitually dipping very much below the horizontal at the top of his swing. Shortening this, he at once begins to improve, and gets back to better form. This sense of swing, by-the-way, is a very rare golfing acquirement. Very

few players, comparatively, can tell accurately by mere sense of swing how far back the club is being taken. Let the experiment be made, and in the majority of trials it will be found that most players' sense of a half or a three-quarter swing results respectively in much greater arcs. The present tendency, it may be remarked, seems to be quite in favor of a very moderate draw-back, with unlimited follow-through.

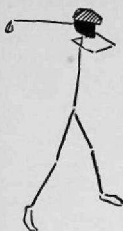
Another error often discernible by others, but of which the individual golfer is



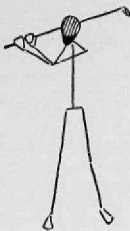
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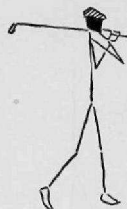
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too often unconscious, is in the incorrect soling of the club. Many a player has been surprised to learn that he has been habitually resting his driver, cleek, or even his putter, on the heel, with the toe more or less cocked up. Correcting this fault by slightly raising the hands or by standing a trifle closer to the ball, a cleaner and truer impact is secured, with more accurate results, and the soled heel is reserved for scientific slicing or a quick loft.

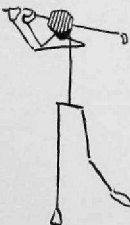
Again, let us take the case of Captain McCleek of Bunkerville, who secretly prides himself upon his swing from the tee, and in unguarded moments has even been known to hint to friends his opinion that, on the whole, it is, unless he is very much mistaken, just about perfect. But the worthy captain is quite unaware of that very decided break, pause, or hitch at the very top of his swing, so obvious to others, and robbing him of who shall say how many yards. And yet the captain as a sound theorist has often been heard to proclaim the essential value of a smooth, uninterrupted swing.

"Otherwise," we have heard him say, "why not, if the smooth and even backward and forward movement is not important, put your club in position at the top of your swing at once, without waggle or draw-back at all?" A pity it is that the captain does not yet see himself as others do, that so he might profit by his undoubtedly excellent theory.

Our friend Major O'Mashie of the same club is handicapped at only 4 below scratch, being deadly at approach and putt. He has never been able, however, to get beyond the 150 mark in his drive. Sincere friends and the "pro" have time and again admonished him that as he draws back his driver almost

if not quite as quickly as he delivers it his swings lack concentrated power. Indeed, the major could drive quite as good ball with his backward swing; and yet he remains obstinately convinced that his draw-back is deliberation itself. Equally with the captain, the major fails to see himself as others do.

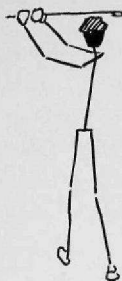
Now various remedies have been suggested for the correction of these and other



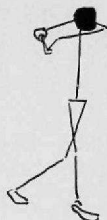
No. 6.



No. 10.



No. 11.



No. 12.

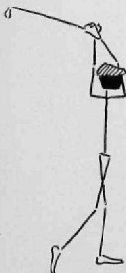
have done. We trust the reader quite follows us here.

No. 1, then, unless we are much mistaken, represents the characteristic top of the swing of a former amateur champion of the United States, and twice runner-up for the same event; while Nos. 2 and 3, to our view, also indicate a (twice) former champion in the amateur ranks at the beginning and at the end respectively of an effective iron stroke in a bunker of sand. Nos. 4 and 5 are not intended to represent departed shades, but the athletic figure of the Amateur champion of

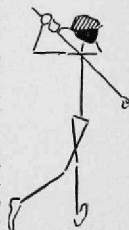
Great Britain as he might be seen if, to adopt the Rev. Sydney Smith's *mot*, he were upon occasion, say in some torrid season, to take off his flesh and play in his bones. Until a better guess be hazarded we take No. 6 to represent one of the great triumvirs of last season's golf in

is; while Nos. 7 and 8 show the essential lines in the figure of another of the triumvirs referred to, one who has also recently budded into authorship by publishing various valuable Hints and Impressions. The remaining pictures are all of amateurs in golfic achievement. We have little doubt but that the admirable contortions to which the letters A. G. L. are added indicate the finished swing of a player who learned his game in England, but was once known in America as one of the Big Four. No. 10 shows A. G. L.'s attitude after a successful iron stroke. Nor are we without specimens, in this ghostly looking gallery, of what may be termed the collegiate style, in the other portraits; concerning which the gentle golfer is invited to speculate for himself.

But a very important observation must not be omitted in conclusion. The lines



No. 13.



No. 14.

Great Britain at the top of his drive, and a remarkably effective stance it

of the poet Burns which we have cited are only applicable to humbler players of the game—those with a modicum of talent, which, however, they are desirous of increasing. For it is most probable that the originals of these sketches, so

excellent is their golfing skill, would scarcely give the proverbial button, fig, or farthing to see themselves a-golfing as "others" do. They have happily outgrown the need and the proper aspiration of the ordinary golfer.

THE UNDER-SPIN ON A GOLF-BALL

RATHER a curious phenomenon in connection with the dynamics of a golf-ball's flight is to be seen by any one who stands on the top of the cliff at that hole at Biarritz where the men play up—or fail to play up—from the lower ground of the *Chambre d'Amour* to the higher levels of most of the green.

As a rule, the hole may be comfortably reached by a good player with a full shot with the lofting-mashie or lofting-iron, but many are the clubs and many are the manners with which men attack this monstrous kopje. The height is said to be about sixty feet. Like most heights that you have to get up, it looks a deal more. There is no half-way house; you must be either up, or, failing that, the ball strikes the cliff-side and comes tumbling down to the bottom again. It is a pleasant amusement, and instructive in the nature of man, to sit on the cliff-head of a warm day surveying the generally fine view, and more particularly the fine efforts of humanity to send a bit of gutta-percha sixty feet in the air.

But it is not the emotion raised by this effort that is dynamically interesting. That interest begins as soon as a well-hit ball, well-pitched on the green, comes to ground. The ball will have been of necessity high-teed, and, of necessity no less, hit with a lofted club. But, granted all this, the amount of back-spin that the ball will be seen to have, by its be-

havior the moment it touches the ground, is quite marvellous, quite unexpected, quite different in degree from anything that the spectator is likely to have seen before, giving him quite new lights on the behavior of the ordinary flying golf-ball.

Often it happens that the ball on touching the ground will run right backwards for a yard or two—like a billiard-ball with under-spin in it after touching another. Now in the ordinary way we do see balls heavily cut so that they will fall, à la Mr. Alfred Lyttelton, like a "poached egg" on the green. But never, under ordinary circumstances, do we see a ball showing anything like the amount of cut that is shown to be on the balls by their behavior when they pitch at this so much higher level than that whence they were struck.

From this there is surely to be drawn the inference that, not only in this case, but in all cases alike, a ball is rotating on its own axis much faster when it is high in the air than when it is fallen again to the level from which it started.

Very likely this is only a truism—a fact that "every school-boy" ought to know. But it is a fact that came as so much of a novelty to many who had the rather unique opportunity of observing it that is given by the curious conformation of a part of the Biarritz course, that "every golfer" at least evidently does not know it.—HORACE G. HUTCHINSON in *Golf Illustrated*.