

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION IN GOLF

By Launcelot Cressy Servos

IN the March number of GOLF I notice certain criticisms of my books by the Hon. R. Stanley Weir, who appears to disagree with me on some of the principles I have laid down in "Practical Instructions in Golf." Mr. Weir is most straightforward, and devoid of any maliciousness. His arguments, advanced as they are, in such a gentlemanly way, could be most admirably discussed between us, after a good dinner and while smoking a cigar. But while I might have the satisfaction of convincing the honorable gentleman, this would not quite satisfy me, as he has seen fit to bring his arguments into print, and so I, too, must bring my retaliation also before the public, in a like manner.

Mr. Weir mentions the fact that I say there are nine ways of making a perfect swing and says: "It is perhaps fortunate for his readers that he only attempts to describe one." *There are nine different full swings.* The club can be drawn back in three different arcs of circles, each arc being as different from the other arc as a straight line differs from a crooked line. They are the "upright," "medium," and "flat," the "upright" being the arc I teach, and expound in my book. These three swings can be played off the "left foot," "standing square," or "off the right foot," making nine different swings. The "flat swing" off the "right foot" is the one played and advocated by J. H. Taylor, which is not a practical swing for one

of advanced years to attempt, although (and this may seem strange, but it is nevertheless true), the "*upright swing*" off the "right foot" is most practical for stout persons.

These nine swings form the basis of every swing used in golf and no matter what individuality may be shown in the making of a swing, the foundation of that swing rests on one of these and in order to advance the would-be golfer, the swing of which he has the foundation has to be built upon. There are three different ways of manipulating the left foot on the backward swing, each one of which is as good as the other, but can only be used with the swing to which it is adapted. So much for the nine swings.

Mr. Weir further says: "We are not sure, however, that Mr. Servos' analysis of the swing selected by him from the nine will commend itself to the majority of students or players." In reply to this, all I have to say is that the swing I describe in "Practical Instruction in Golf" is the one I have found most successful in teaching to golfers who have wasted years in a vain attempt to acquire one of the other eight. Mr. Weir does not agree with me on the "outward" reaching of the left hand on the backward swing. If one did not reach out he would be playing one of the other two swings, either the "medium" or "flat," the "upright swing" being distinguished from both these, by just this movement. Mr. Weir says: "Horace G. Hutchinson does not go as far as this."

Some of Mr. Hutchinson's treatises are sound and correct. But he makes the common mistake of all great golfers who write, in describing his own method of play and setting it before every other method. Some of his theories are worse than useless to ninety-nine golfers out of a hundred. As, for instance, the "turning of the club in the right hand" on the backward swing. "Elevating the right elbow to the level of the right shoulder on the backward swing," etc. These may be good for him, but no one else can use them any more than they could use my interlocking grip. Mr. Weir further says: "To rise on the left toe is the worst possible advice to give a golfer." To rise on the left toe without bending the knee is. But if Mr. Weir had put in the whole sentence as it appears (p. 22, line 3), "Rise on the left toe, and as you come up on it turn the left knee in toward the right," the full force of my meaning would become apparent. Mr. Weir says I "inconsistently" urge the putting into the stroke of the whole weight of the body. He does not add, however, that I say "by a turning of the hips," which he should have done. The body is not the *FULCRUM*, as Mr. Weir says it is. The body is the *POWER* and *FULCRUM* combined, which transfers to the lever, i. e., the arms and club, the power to move the weight, i. e., the ball, by the combined turning and power derived

from the same. As to the "right hand holding firmer on the irons," after years of toil in the orthodox, viz.: the same grip as used on the wooden clubs—I gave it up in disgust, and of the hundreds of pupils I have taught this new method to, they, one and all, pronounce it so far superior to the old way, that there is no degree of comparison.

Nor is the advice "to putt off the toe of the putter," "to turn the face of iron clubs to the left" idiosyncracies, as Mr. Weir calls them. I have tested them in my own play and in teaching, which latter test is the only true test of a theory, and found them correct.

A ball can be driven as far cross-handed, and the game played as well this way as any other. Dr. William Fleming of the Hermitage Golf Club, of Richmond, Va., is one of the longest drivers south of the Mason and Dixon line. He drives cross-handed. Mr. C. M. Ransom of Buffalo, N. Y., one of the best golfers in western New York State, plays cross-handed, and several of our good players in the Boston district, and others where golf is played. For that reason and because I have taught a number of cross-handed players how to improve their game without changing their grip did I add the chapter on cross-handed play.

