

THE ART OF GOLF

By Sir Walter Simpson, Bart.

ANNOTATED BY THE HON. MR. RECORDER WEIR.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

OF DRIVING IN GENERAL.

(Continued.)

On the other hand, there is no more fruitful source of bad golf than to suppose that there is some best style for each individual which must be searched out by him if he is to get the best results out of himself. In a broad and general way, each player ought to have, and has, a style which is the reflection of himself—his build, his mind, the age at which he began, and his previous habits. The ex-cricketer reflects cricket. The rowing-man has a straight back, and there are characteristics in each golfer the history of which it is more or less difficult to trace. This is his style; and however much he may feel he modifies it, to an onlooker it will remain the same—because it is the same. It is not the general principles that a man has before him (of these he is seldom conscious) when trying to find out his absolutely best. In some minor detail of which he exaggerates the importance—some particular twitch, which has arrested his attention after a very satisfactory drive. This will be stubbornly pursued till it is exaggerated into a mannerism to which it is secretly believed everything good in his driving is due. If golfers could only become convinced that no mannerism is of the

slightest value, that there are fifty different styles (by style I mean here the petty variables of which alone we are conscious) in which a good shot can be made, that it is not indispensable to repeat in the next the same movements felt in one good shot, bad ones would be less frequent. There is, I repeat, a categorical imperative in golf—‘Hit the ball;’ but there are no minor absolutes. There is no best shape, or weight, or lie of clubs—no best stance, grip, or swing. From the nature of the case, one does not change his driver during the round; but the other things may vary every shot—nay, will, unless one makes a point of preventing them, sacrificing ease and accuracy to a consistency which, if stubbornly insisted on, may permanently cramp driving. There is no better proof of this argument than to watch a boy of about twelve, who hits every ball clean and (for his strength) far, of whom there are very many. At this age even the broad features of style are unsettled. At one moment he swings round his neck, at the next round his shoulder, his feet near together or wide apart, according to the unconscious fancy of the moment. And yet each ball flies away with unerring certainty. This should teach us that when we think we see what we are doing wrong, or what we are doing right, that when we cling to this bit of style or avoid that, we are merely dis-

tracting our attention from the main issue.*

CHAPTER II.

OF STYLE IN DRIVING.

FOR the purpose of analysis the swing of the golfer may be divided into three parts: 1st, Position; 2d, Address; 3d, Swing proper.

Position.—Some treatises on the game tell us in feet and inches the distance the player ought to stand from the ball; in degrees, the angle at which it ought to be placed between his feet.† Such information, whether true or not, is impractical. Arithmetic is required to count the shots, but cannot assist us in making them; and as for mensuration—well! a six-inch scale marked on the putter shaft often prevents disputes. Roughly speaking, however, it may be laid down that one ought to stand what professionals call square to the ball—that is to say, facing at right angles to the direction it is meant to drive in. Any decided deviation from this position is a mistake, although scarcely any one adheres to it absolutely. Many place the left foot nearer the ball than the right, commonly called standing

“in front” (though different from the fault of doing so illustrated in Fig. 1, p. 163), and lean more weight on the former than on the latter.‡ This is because the left leg of most men is the stronger. Some of the finest players stand to their ball in this way; but on

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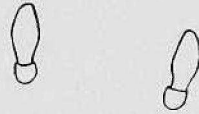


FIG. 3.

STANDING “IN FRONT.”

the whole it is to be avoided, because it tends to produce wildness and uncertainty of driving. Obviously the position offers facilities for a long swing back, and those who are lured on by the charms of an occasional raker will adopt it. Why occasional? The reason seems to be

* The majority of golfing students, I venture to think, will be inclined to question the unqualified soundness of these general conclusions. Given the same conditions, will not all tee-shots be played in the same way? Is not the player who varies his stance and grip and swing according to whim or “unconscious fancy” courting swift disaster? Of course, the player should be schooled to negotiate the hanging or cuppy or uphill lie as he meets them, varying his stroke to meet the particular exigency, but even then he will find it best to play his hanging lies according to a style approved by experiment, his cuppy balls by another equally well tested, and so on. It would be fatal to suppose that there is anything haphazard or inspirational about golfing strokes.

† Mr. Beldam's linoleum mat, now on the market, is a square of four feet subdivided into six-inch squares. His book on Great Golfers shows them standing on the mat ready for play or in actual play. By counting the six-inch squares the position of the feet to the ball is seen. By studying the stances of the champions the aspirant may evolve one for himself.

The favorite stance of the day is undoubtedly the open, although the great influence of Badminton has been in favour of placing the ball nearer the left foot, with the right foot a few inches farther back than the left. Vardon, Taylor, Braid, Herd and White all play off the right. The chief advantages of this open stance are that the ball can more easily be kept in view as one draws back, and that the forward swing can then be made larger. The turning of one's shoulders in the draw-back sometimes makes it difficult to keep the ball in sight if the ball be much to the left, and obviously the follow-through is in danger of being restricted.

‡ “Niblick” in his “Hints to Golfers” recommends that the ball be placed even to the left of the left foot, but I cannot find that this stance has been found advisable by any player of eminence. An exception exists, perhaps, in the case of Mr. Reinhart of Princeton who stands very much in “in front,” and I am informed that Willie Dunn has taught this stance to his pupils. It is certainly far from orthodox and looks bizarre.

that when the heel of the left foot leaves the ground most of the weight of the body is supported on its toes, which unsteadies the player's balance, and consequently his driving. The remedy is scarcely to let the heel leave the ground at all—a correction made by all steady drivers who have acquired this style. The segment of swing thus chopped off is, however, lost entirely. It cannot be added to the other end, as, of course, the stance which takes the right shoulder out of the road brings the other more forward. The result is shorter driving if steady off the tee, but not from bad lies; for this stance, by enabling the player to get "his shoulders well into it," is very commanding. On the whole, however, it is better to stand square or open as in Fig. 4 or 5. This gives freer scope for a full second half to the swing, which, I shall insist further on, is of more importance than the first half. Exaggeration, even conscious posing, in either direction, will produce, in the first case, pulling, wildness, topping; in the second, heeling, skying, or at best feebleness.

If we observe a player who stands "square" about to strike, it will be apparent that his ball is at a more obtuse angle to his left than to his right foot. If the player stands "in front" (Fig 3), as it is called, the ball is more nearly still in a line with the left, the opposite being true



FIG. 4.

STANDING SQUARE.



FIG. 5.

STANDING OPEN.

when the stance is "open." But in practice he ought not to attempt to measure this angle, for the all-sufficient reason that his measurement will be wrong. To prove this, we have but to ask an experienced player who stands "square," at what angle he poses to his ball. He will say at an equal angle from each foot. We have but to watch him play to be convinced that he is mistaken. That he cannot measure it will be made evident by a little experiment regarding another point. Some players turn their toes in, some out. (Which is right? Either, provided the position be not strained.) Now, if you place yourself opposite a ball, at what some books call the proper angle, it will be found that by pivoting on the heels, although your place, or its, is in no way changed, a drive would be impossible without lifting one foot and putting it down somewhere else.

As the angle at which the player ought to stand can only be determined by instinct, as a comprehensive glance at feet and ball will give no information even to engineers accustomed to mensuration, so there is no measurable proper distance at which we ought to be from the ball. Much depends on the lie of the club, its length, that of the man, and his style. Yet the varying of it is a common cause

of bad driving. Quite suddenly, from unconsciously changing it, a player goes off his game: without knowing it, he begins to hold his hands too far reached out, or to stoop forward with his body. It is useless for him to note his proper distance some time when he is driving well, for he may maintain that and yet be all wrong. For instance, he may be cancelling his overreach by standing very upright, or stooping and tucking in his arms. Always to take a natural pose towards the ball must be the result of habit. Even the best players go wrong occasionally from getting into the way of standing at the wrong distance. The worst of it is, stooping or overreaching soon feels natural, and the bad driving is ascribed to some other cause. In its proper place, I will point out a few of the results as regards the ball, which ought to awaken suspicion that our position has got wrong.

How far apart the feet ought to be is the next point. About this, as about so many other things, there is no hard and fast rule. It is sufficient to point out that the closer they are, the freer will be your swing; but when they get too near together your driving will become feeble and uncertain in direction. On the other hand, a wide stride stiffens the player, thus shortening his driving, although it gives him power. In a bunker, or in a bad lie, it is politic to straddle more than usual, if you remember at the same time to swing short.

Address.—After taking their stance, most players are in the habit of making some preliminary motions with their club before proceeding to drive.* In some cases these flourishes are slight, in others more free: but, whichever they be, they

are only reasonable and advantageous, if made to waken up the muscles and to let the hands settle to their grip. With too many players, addressing the ball is merely an excuse for other thoughts. One will take this opportunity to scuffle round his ball, another to get nearer it or further from it, another to lift his toes and assure himself that his heels are well on the ground, another to look at his feet or the position of his hands, another to hunch up a shoulder, another to turn in a toe. In other words, the time during which the player should be getting concentrated on the work of hitting, many waste in thinking of the quackeries which they hope will take the responsibility of aiming off their shoulders. Some of those who thus waste the precious moments make no pretence of shaking themselves together. They stand stock-still. What are they thinking of? Are they bidding a fond adieu to the ball, shrewdly suspecting that the club head may not be passing that way on its return journey. Slowly and reluctantly at last club and ball part, when suddenly whack! From others there are storm warnings. The club rises, and returns solemnly—Once! twice! thrice! The player seems to say, "I warn you, look out. Look out once! twice! thrice! Very well, take that, and off you go!" Then there is the elbow twitch, which seems to say, "I am just shaking my clothes loose to go for you, and getting my arms free to follow you." It is a bragging kind of address, which threatens a strong blow, and is really preliminary to a weak one. The confident twiddle which makes no pretence of aiming, but commandingly points out to the ball the direction of the hole, and is followed by an angry quick swing, such as comes unawares behind a disobedient child, is not so sure to strike home as the blow it is compared to.

Some twiddles are complimentary to

*"Waggles" in modern parlance. Sir Walter calls them "twiddles." Twiddles or waggles they are equally useful and useless; useful in waking up the muscles; useless in that they form no essential part of the swing proper.

faults which the player proposes to avoid. A long, slow straight motion over the ball foreshadows a determination to follow it well. A stiff small one means that the player is bent on gripping tight. A quick jerky one betrays the intention of driving a screamer. There is the sanguine, the phlegmatic, the healthy, the headachy flourish, and a thousand more. None of these, except in so far as they suggest that the player has a right or a wrong idea as to how the fact of a palpable hit is to be accomplished, are essential. But placing the club behind the ball for an instant after them is essential, if the shot is not to be more or less bad. Although the address is usually a shadow of things to come, it is no guarantee of them.

Free preliminaries are quite compatible with a cramped performance, and *vice versa*. . . . It may be said, then, Why not abandon them altogether? Why not place the club behind the ball, and strike at once? In these cases, where addressing the ball consists in merely making ornamental flourishes, or when they are gone through to give the player time to speculate on the chances of a miss, or to call up before his imagination a view of the bunker in front which he has just taken a last glance at, they would be better dispensed with. But, properly apprehended, they have their uses, some of which we have indicated; the chief one, I wish now to insist upon.

(*To be continued.*)

TO CHANDLER EGAN

By Wm. Rose Benét.

The King is dead! Long live the King!
(How oft 'tis writ on History's page!)
The ghosts of many a vanished age
Rise up to join the praise I sing.
Youth conquers Youth; and bravely died
The ripper veterans of the field.
Age brings ripe skill; yet Age must yield—
Youth will not—can not—be denied.

Long years ago fields shone as green—
The sky as blue—the world as fair.
Then supple Youth could do and dare
What (Veteran now) hath never been.
But years have passed. Low lies the pride
That stirred *that* generations veins.
And on *thy* head the wreath remains
'Till—*Youth again be not denied.*

The Champion falls. The Champion claims.
The King is dead. Long live the King!
The worlds with newer praises ring.
The laurel wreath hath crowned thy aims.
To thee the world is gold. Beside
This magic hour all else hath paled.
Egan—The maxim hath not failed
Forget not—*Youth is ne'er denied!*

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CHAPTER II.

OF STYLE IN DRIVING.

(Continued.)

“HOW ought I to grip my club?” is a question which causes lifelong trouble to, and bars the progress of, many players. Addressing the ball means working their hands into some cramped position. They arrange the left hand tight, the right loose or tight, in the palm or in the fingers, under the club, over it, or with the knuckles pointing in some prescribed direction, according to whose disciple they are.¹ There is scarcely a modification of holding with two hands which some one has not adopted as his grip, each giving its owner a sense of command over the club, so long as it is at rest, behind the ball. That a player should give attention to this important matter is right enough; but the mistake usually made is to get the hands into the most efficient position for dealing a heavy, instead of a swift blow, without reference to the most essential

point in a grip—namely, that it be so arranged as to prevent the club either slipping or twisting in the palms during any part of the swing. If a player gets his hands under the club-handle (see Figs. 8 and 9) it is impossible to take more than a half swing without letting go. If (see Fig. 10) he have the right more under than the left, and tight (a grip one is apt to adopt when a “screamer” is contemplated), anything but a swing round the waist must bring the club-head back to the ball turned in (which is the secret of the screamer when it comes off, and also the cause of its failing so often).²

If any one by chance has read this last paragraph carefully, he will feel pretty certain that I am about to describe the proper position and tightness of each hand. But he will be wrong. On the contrary, my view is that players may take great liberties with their grip,—at least with that of their right hand,—without affecting driving. The club may be sunk in the palm, to save a sore finger, or held in the fingers if the palm be painfully

¹ The grip is as important in its way as the swing itself, for many an otherwise good swing is spoiled by a defective grip. It is a good grip that will bring the face of the club squarely against the ball; it is a bad grip which brings the face of the impact at an angle. It is also a bad grip which ties up the wrists or either of them, but this defect is more quickly felt and rectified than the other. It is not wise to dogmatize about golf, but we will venture to say that the secret of a good grip depends chiefly

upon the left hand. You may take great liberties with the right, but the rule as to the left is well-nigh absolute. The rule is this: The large knuckles should face the direction of play; the more they get under the handle the worse the play. The left wrist being already turned to the left when the knuckles are undermost there is so much loss of power in the swing.

² The screamer will have a touch of pull; perhaps more than a touch, the failure will be topped or foundered.

horny, without prejudice to play, so long as it is so held as not to slip or turn one hair's-breath throughout the shot. Nay! in the right it may be even allowed to turn.³ In fact, if a player grip as in Fig. 10, he must hold loose with the right, and allow the club to slip round if his swing be perfect, otherwise his wrist becomes locked. Of this a trial swing will convince any one. It is only possible with a grip as in Figs. 6 and 7 for the right hand to remain glued to the club throughout a perfect swing. "How is the grip to be tested for adherence during the swing?" is the real question, which the address ought to solve thus:—Having placed himself opposite the ball, let the player take hold of his club loosely, but so that, if held short, the end of the shaft would pass under the wrist bones (somewhat as in Figs. 6 and 7). Let him swing it backwards and forwards freely over the ball, describing an elongated eight, whose length is limited by the locking-point of the wrist joints. After two or three such continuous figures have been described, the hands, still holding loosely, will settle themselves into a proper relation to each other, and to the shot. The club will then be placed behind the ball, the grasp tightened just as it is, and the blow delivered. Whether both should be tightened, or only the left—whether it is into the fingers, or the palm, these movements are to adjust the club—are immaterial points, which may be left to individual taste. Nor ought the amount of tightening to be treated as important. Some only tighten a little, some as much as they can; all that can be said is, that the limit of permissible looseness is overstepped when, in the course of sweeping away the ball, there is any slipping or turning

in the left hand at the very least. The preliminary flourish under discussion will be detected in the driving of the best and freest players. Should an elongated eight be found on any ancient Egyptian monument, it is certainly the symbol for golf, and will prove that venerable nation to have played the game. I say this flourish can be "detected" in a good style; but a practised player does not require to pass over his ball more than once, or he may even pretermitt all, except the merest rudiment. He has a proper hold at once, without searching for it, and can at once proceed unhesitatingly to strike. There is no pause, after the club has been placed behind the ball, to allow a final and fatal alteration to be made. It is interesting confirmation of the soundness of what I am advancing, that fine players, many of whom are proverbial for the instantaneousness of their address, are often more elaborate in a big match. Whereas a mere rudiment of a flourish is all they ordinarily indulge in, this becomes one or more complete eights, when a single mistake might be fatal. It is as if they said, "I am almost certain to grip rightly; but it is as well to test it."

Whether this plan of preliminary flourish is or is not the best, there is no doubt the grip should be found by some sort of trial swing, not by placing the club behind the ball, and settling down as comfortably as possible. The true grip is that which accommodates itself to a free swing, not to a commanding stance. Indeed players may be divided into two classes, according as they act upon or ignore this principle. The one arrives at the position of the hands typified in Figs. 6 and 7, and perhaps Fig. 10; the other is prone to the fault shown in Figs. 8 and 9. The one makes its flourishes, places its club for an instant behind the ball, and without hesitation strikes. If they allow it to dwell longer, it is not comfortable perhaps. Nor need it be. Ease whilst swinging,

³ Badminton teaches that the club should be allowed to turn naturally in the right hand until it is resting upon the web between the forefinger and thumb; but such teaching is now commonly regarded as heretical—Vardon, Braid, Taylor and Mr. Travis all condemn it.

not whilst at rest, is the essential thing. The other finds its grip whilst the club is at rest, and then proceeds to flourishes. Take the case of a player of this class who makes the orthodox figure-eight gyration. He takes his grip, makes a motion over the ball, and, unless by

have the tact to accommodate their swing to the conditions they have imposed upon it. But assuredly this common error of taking hold of the club in the most comfortable way for aiming at the ball, rather than for the blow, has to answer for many monstrous styles, efficient and otherwise.⁴

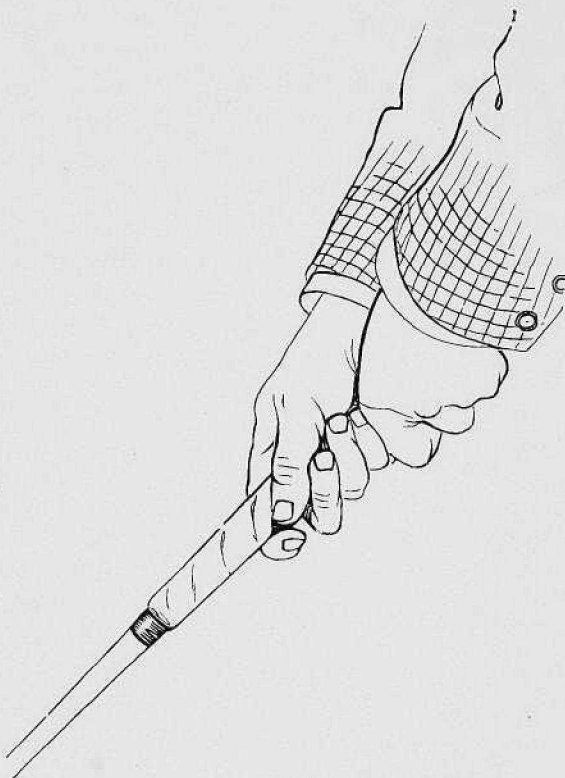


FIG. 6.

PROPER GRIP. HANDS "OVER" OR "ABOVE."

chance it is a true one, disturbs it by so doing. You may see him pause a moment to rearrange it; the other accepts the disturbance as a proper correction. Whatever the prowess of the player, his class in this respect can be detected by watching whether, after putting his club finally behind the ball, he hesitates or strikes at once. Nearly all bad players belong to the class which does not arrive at its grip by experiment but dogmatically; not that all in it are bad, however. Their grip may by chance be good, or they may

⁴ In his book on "Great Golfers," Mr. Beldam cites Vardon, Taylor and Braid as putting importance upon the wrists being turned under the shaft at the top of the swing. This is to obtain the maximum of power and to ensure bringing the face properly to the ball. If it is important that the wrists be found under the shaft at the top of the swing, it will be found impossible to secure this unless the left hand grips with knuckles facing line of play at least, and left thumb well under. The left thumb extended straight down the shaft secures this to a certain extent, but it should incline to the right rather than the left side of the middle line of the shaft. A special feature of the left-hand grip thus described is that it compels both hands to hang low, and certainly gives greater power to

Swing.—"My swing" is a constant theme for conversation with the young golfer.⁵ He is for ever making it quicker or slower, longer or shorter, some skilful player being in his mind's eye, whom he fancies he is imitating—or rather, whom he is

imitating in every way except one—the only one which will give him a true style—not thinking about it when playing, which the good player never does. His one problem is to sweep the ball away with speed. This is done by his body

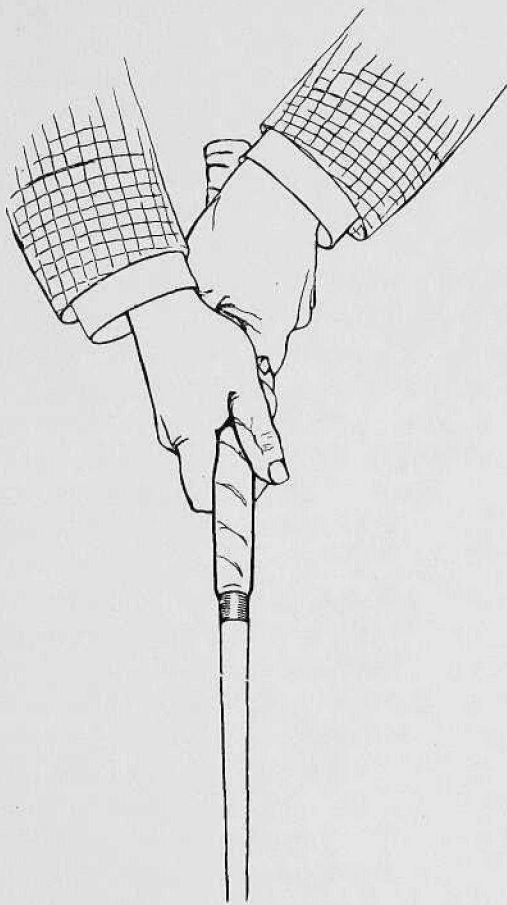


FIG. 7.

PROPER GRIP. HANDS "OVER" OR "ABOVE."

the left arm. In adopting this style of left hand grip a caution may be offered. It is this: A strong tendency will be found in the draw-back to keep the face of the club looking towards the ball, whereas in obedience to rightward turning wrists it should be turned away. If the face is turned away it is the wrists that do it and if the wrists are working the chances are all in favor of a good stroke. Once again, let us say that in coming down the wrist must *pull* the club through turning this time to the left. There is obviously only one instant when the face of the club can properly meet the ball. Hence the mean and importance of timing.

⁵ Sir Walter's remarks about the swing are highly instructive. He advocates taut wrists and taut left arm with an accommodating right

arm. He is very severe upon dipping the club from the wrists, say, at the top of the swing. Let the player look upon his left arm as the part of the club. He can see at once that it will not lengthen his driving to have a break in it somewhere. Such is Sir Walter's doctrine. This dipping of the club below the horizontal is a sure mark, it may be observed, of a defective swing. In the true swing the club tends to swing horizontally round the neck both in the draw-back and the follow-through. Any tendency to dip towards the ground indicates a wrong conception and style. It indicates wrists too loose and not under control. The discriminating reader of Sir Walter's notes will note that "tautness" does not mean "stiffness."

remaining a firm fulcrum for the lever composed of his arms and club. His swing back ends when the contact of his left biceps with his chest prevents it going further, his wrists remaining as taut as he can keep them. Not that he thinks of this, or of anything but sweeping the ball away. Let the beginner devote himself to the same problem. For a long time he will have a short swing; but it will lengthen quickly enough. There is not the slightest danger of its not doing so, unless he fall into the error of supposing that the more gently he hits the surer he is.

Many begin in quite another way. They see the professional's club swishing round his back, and they determine, at all cost, to get theirs as far round. By a variety of schemes they accomplish this, and become the proud possessors of a concatenation of contortions, in which no one but themselves recognizes the resemblance to a full swing. Some swing naturally to a certain point, then, letting their wrists bend, drop the thing down their backs, draw it up again, and proceed to drive the ball. In the meantime their position has almost certainly changed in some way, so that the club head does not return to the ball along the same imaginary line it went from it. Others avoid the natural check of the biceps against the body by sticking out the left elbow and passing the arm round the neck, which, being thinner, allows the hands to get as far as the back of the head. To play in this way it is usual, or at least

better (if I may be allowed to use an approbatory adjective at all in reference to such a matter), to employ upright clubs, although they will not overcome the inevitable uncertainty of direction. To get the club to the back of the neck, it must be drawn away at a tangent to the direction the ball is to be driven in.⁶ To prevent it going to the left, the player has to resort to some counter modification. He must, after impact, let his arms away to the right. Should he be lucky enough to catch the ball at the exact instant when his curve is practically parallel to the direction it is meant to go in, although "cut" the shot will be straight; if he reaches it a hair earlier, it will be "pulled"—a hair later, it will be "heeled." These are the terms the player would use. It would be more exact to describe the three drives as a cut to the right, a cut to the left, and a straight cut. Some who drive in this way stand well in front of the ball, and thus reduce their curve more nearly to a straight line; but I have seen none get rid of the cut entirely, which they might do by turning their back altogether to the line of fire.

The left elbow-joint, as a joint, has no part in a true swing. But it is a prevalent habit to close it a little after the club has circled back as far as it naturally should. This is not quite so silly a way of giving one's-self the sensation of swinging far as is dropping the club over the shoulder by means of the wrist joints. But it is foolish enough, particularly if the player begins his swing with straight

⁶ Sir Walter means that the club is not to be drawn straight back as we used to be taught, any more than it has to be propelled straight forward in the direction of the hole—another dogmatic error of the olden pedagogy. The true swing describes a big hoop-like circle around the shoulders. It is doubtless good to make the hoop as big as possible, but it is clear that the club in leaving the ball must ascend in a rearward manner if it is ever to get to the back of us, and after the impact it is easier and better and necessary that it turn to the left. The old theory was practically based upon the theory that ball and club remained in adhesion for an

appreciable time after the impact and we were solemnly shown the mark of the ball upon a clean club face in proof. As a matter of fact the moment of contact is instantaneous and the shorter the better. Caution: J. H. Taylor's advice to bring the club back "round the legs" and to keep the right elbow well in, probably suits your stocky player with sturdy powerful wrists and forearms, but it means that a small circle is described with more force, relatively, than momentum. I think that Braid and Vardon are better models for more attenuated mortals, in that they do not bring the club back and around so sharply.

instead of slightly bent arms, in order to have more elbow-bending to do afterwards. Any one can see, when it is pointed out, that this joint work is merely a break which has to be mended before the sweep forward commences. Yet good players often take to it for a time if their driving is not satisfactory, feeling, in spite of common-sense, that they are lengthening their reach.

It would be profitless to describe more of the endless twists and twiddles with wrists and elbows which golfers acquire, seeking for a long swing in the wrong way, which is the same thing as seeking for it at all. Hundreds of balls are daily "foozled" which would be struck but for these little spasms after the club has reached its proper goal. One sees them all over the links. They remind us sometimes of hairs which have grown too long and split at the ends; sometimes they suggest blind men groping their way.

It must strike any one who thinks of it, as curious that so many should wander so far from the main road in search of a swing. One reason is, as already indicated, that swings are among the things which, according to Longfellow, "are not what they seem." Hence the errors of imitators. The professional appears to wind his club round his back. It is not so. It is the club which winds round him, not because he wishes it to do so, but because his muscles, though knit, have their natural elasticity. The player is in the centre of a circle, at a point in the circumference of which is the ball. The more nearly his club head describes a perfect segment whilst driving, the better. But it is not possible to make a true circle swiftly with a springy wire, which the player is, or a springy club shaft, if you will. He is even a bad shaft, weak in some places—for example, at the wrists. Let a player look upon his left arm as a part of a club. He can

see at once that it will not lengthen his driving to have a break in it somewhere. He might as well expect to lengthen his swing by putting joints in the actual wooden shaft, strengthened (say) with strong india-rubber bands, spliced over them, to imitate human joints. In other words, every joint of the fine driver's left arm below the shoulder is as taut as the extensor muscles (I rather think these are the ones) keep it without undue attention to the point. I have said the left arm. I should say nothing about the right, were it not that I might be supposed to mean that it too was to be treated as part of the shaft, and that I was advocating that stiff dunch from the shoulder with arms not naturally bent but rigidly straight, by which many late beginners remove their ball from the tee. In true driving, the right arm has to accommodate itself in the swing back. It is loose and obedient. Its elbow joint has to flex, and it is not until it is brought back to within a foot of the ball that it joins with the other in the work of driving—not till after impact that it becomes master, the other slave.

Fine players are not only apt to lead others astray by appearing, to the superficial observer, loose and flexible in every joint, but knotless contortionists, who are really so, look stiff and ponderous. Learners are thus doubly impressed with the idea that a free and flabby swing are one and the same thing. Nor is it easy for them to be disabused of their error. No man can see himself strike, and thus learn that the swing he has adopted, the flexibility he feels, is visible not as ease but as awkwardness. Nor is there much chance of finding out his errors by comparing his sensations with those of good players, who, as a rule, pay no attention to such matters. Curiously enough, if pressed to say something, it will often be (I have got this answer from many professionals), "My longest

balls are when I feel I've got my wrists into it." This misleads the tyro terribly, although it is true. The professional gets his sensation from a full, taut, india-rubbery swing. It is the result of his determination to get back to the ball as soon as possible. The other takes it to mean that he ought to get as far from it as he can by allowing the club to master his wrists. One day an adversary sought my praise for the way in which he was driving with his iron. I said (which was apparent), "You have a fuller swing with it than with the play club." "You mean the opposite," he answered. I repeated my commentary, and he rejoined, "That is curious. I've been off my iron play, and am getting into it again by taking a half swing." But I was right, which he admitted after experimenting in the matter. In driving from the tee this player had a long—a very long—swing, if by that is meant the distance the club head meandered away from the ball before

coming back to it. In addressing, his arms, instead of having the natural bend, were straight as bars. They took the club a long way off, flexion of the left elbow took it further, flexion of the wrists another foot. By stretching, over-reaching, relaxing, his journey was the longest possible; but travelling far and swinging long are different matters. With his iron he described a true segment of a circle, every muscle as stiff and taut all the time as when the ball was struck.

In short, then, a good swing seems to the onlooker swift and flexible; but if the player feels supple, he exhibits an awkward, stiff, straggling movement. The player ought to be, in his own hands, a stiff bow which he bends and shoots with. Of course, by practice, he learns to bend this bow with ease, and to shoot with accuracy. But when he goes off his driving the remedy is not to lengthen and loosen the string, but rather to tighten and shorten it.

(To be continued.)

