

THE GOLFER IN WINTER

By Mr. Recorder Weir, D. C. L.

Now is the winter of our discontent.

—SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN the winter of the golfer's discontent has settled down upon him in these frigid northern latitudes; when, at length, having carefully oiled his beloved clubs he regretfully puts them away, with his own hands, in some cool corner (not too dry), to await the passing of that dreary interval before the welcome vernal equinox, he may yet mitigate the pain of enforced abstention from golf by steadily preparing for the season to come. He may, for instance, bring forth his clubs from their cool resting-place from time to time, and familiarize himself with each one, attentively examining their respective peculiarities, and affectionately considering how completely responsive they are to the measure of skill employed in their use. The golfer who merely knows his clubs from actual play with them on the links, only half knows them, and does justice neither to himself nor to them. So eager, indeed, is the average golfer to be at his game, that after the first scrutiny at the time of purchase he contents himself with mere glances of recognition. So intent is he to keep his eye upon the ball that his faithful clubs are treated as mere machines. But your true golfer entertains something akin to sentiment for these implements of joy. He handles them always with due regard, and even waggles them with infinite respect. What hinders the earnest aspirant, therefore, in the more leisurely winter-time, to note the lie of his mashie or mid-iron, his brassey or driver; their relative weight;—to test, not once or twice, but

many times, the curves of his half or quarter swing (there being objections perhaps to essaying the full), the rearward arc and divergent club head in the correct draw-back, the beautiful way the face comes forward to meet the (imaginary) ball, the airy track of the follow-through, his stances, his grips, the turning of his wrists, not least, with the help of some friendly mirror, the turning of his shoulders about a motionless head,—these and other niceties of golf that escape him in the excitement of the game on perfervid summer links!

What better time, indeed, than the gelid months, with the comfortable warmth of indoors and the absence of the golfing haste and fever so uncontrollable in the season, to decide upon the best stance (for him) in putting, all the more that in this exercise the gracious household divinities are not so likely to feel concern as to the results of practical experiments with the ball itself;—to decide also whether it is best to tap your putt or follow through, to rest the body's weight upon the right or left leg, or to test how even in the putt one may slice or pull?

Or, as the intelligent golfer has ere this discovered, that in golf the race (in the long game) is emphatically to the swift, if the battle be not also to the strong, what better time to develop or preserve the necessary suppleness of forearm, wrists, and shoulders? Swift ness, strength, and skill are the sibilant trio of golfing Graces that every votary should aspire to win, and few indeed are those upon whom nature has bestowed them all. In the days when most estimable gentle-

men leisurely traversed the links in top-hats and stiff cravats, "condition" was not, perhaps, a matter of very great moment, but to-day the sinewy arm and toughened body are indispensable to excellence. Why, then, may not he who hopes to play the royal game again next season, and in improved form and style, judiciously keep flexible his arms and shoulders by Indian clubs and dumb-bells, or by those other digital and manual exercises that are so easily learned and practised? The golfer, musically inclined, whose piano or violin expertness has, not without regret and even qualms of conscience, deteriorated since spring unlocked the links, may resume his (or her) technical studies in Kreutzer or Czerny with all the keener relish from knowledge of the fact that such things as bowing and double-stopping, or octave-playing, and other technical exercises known to the pianist or violinist, enormously increase the muscularity and flexibility of wrists and forearms. It is well known that virtuosos such as Paderewski, Rosenthal, Ysaye, Kubelik, and their compeers possess a very comfortable and effective brachial development demonstrable in more ways than by their artistic performances merely.

And among other things, the imprisoned northern golfer may give special attention to the operation of his left arm, assuming him to be dexterous. Paradox though it may appear, the right-handed player plays, or should play, with a very

pronounced left arm. The left arm, it is agreed, is mainly responsible for the form of one's swing, and upon it certainly depends to a large degree an effective follow-through. To test the truth of this, attempt a full swing with the right hand alone, and note how it soars upward and away in the draw-back, and how comparatively close to the left shoulder it is brought at the finish. Now try the full swing with the left hand alone, and note how far out it reaches in the follow-through, but how near the correct line it travels in the draw-back.

But for these extensive motions the prudent golfer chooses the roomiest apartments of his domicile. For although the excitement attendant upon these winter studies and experiments is tame indeed compared with the real play of the summer-time, tales have been told, not without ample foundation in fact, of the sudden crashing of candelabra or bric-a-brac in divers households, to the great consternation of their offended Lares and Penates,—the cause of the disturbance being some absorbed and wistful golfer, club in hand, in the comfort of his own sanctum, a blizzard probably raging without, but in fancy transported to the green links of summer days where no pent-up Utica confines his powers, and where he essays a highly creditable swing in point of form it may be, but with more or less direful results to furniture, and a sudden realization that he is still in the winter of his discontent.

THE LONG GAME

By Leighton Calkins

THE first round that I ever played
 I started bright and early;
 I lost two dozen balls or more,
 And got back late, and surly.