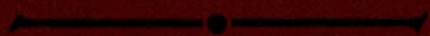


GETTING OUT  
OF THE ROUGH



JOHN M. VANDER MEULEN

WILSON  
ANNEX



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enjoy this because it  
was written by an  
former minister & god*

**Getting Out  
of the Rough**

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**JOHN M. VANDER MEULEN**

# Getting Out of the Rough

BY

JOHN M. VANDER MEULEN



NEW YORK  
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**GETTING OUT OF THE ROUGH  
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**THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED**  
**TO**  
**MY FRIEND**  
**H. STACY SMITH,**  
**WHO, IN THE LARGER GAME OF LIFE,**  
**IS ONE OF THE TRUEST SPORTSMEN**  
**I KNOW**

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## **Chapter I: WHY MEN PLAY**



Let's play it out—this little game called Life,  
Where we are listed for so brief a spell;  
Not just to win, amid the tumult rife,  
Or where acclaim and gay applauses swell;  
Nor just to conquer where some one must lose,  
Or reach the goal whatever be the cost;  
For there are other, better ways to choose,  
Though in the end the battle may be lost.

Let's play it out as if it were a sport  
Wherein the game is better than the goal,  
And never mind the detailed "score's" report  
Of errors made, if each with dauntless soul  
But stick it out until the day is done,  
Not wasting fairness for success or fame,  
So when the battle has been lost or won,  
The world at least can say: "He played the game."

Let's play it out—this little game called Work,  
Or War or Love or what part each may draw;  
Play like a man who scorns to quit or shirk  
Because the break may carry some deep flaw;  
Nor simply holding that the goal is all  
That keeps the player in the contest staying;  
But stick it out from curtain rise to fall,  
As if the game itself were worth the playing.

GRANTLAND RICE.

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## Chapter I: WHY MEN PLAY

Let me say at the outset that I am writing on golf not because I have acquired any proficiency in the game. I am and shall probably always be only a "dub." But there are many things about the game which even a "dub" may come to know. And perchance he may be able to see the moral and religious sanctions and interpretations of the game even better than many a professional or than many a skillful amateur.

It is of those sanctions and interpretations that I am constrained to write. And I want to begin boldly by claiming for the game of golf the sanction of the Almighty Himself.

The question has been raised by scientific psychologists, Why do men play? For science must needs always find some scientific reason even for facts that are so commonplace with us that we take them quite for granted without any reasons or explanations. So science asks, Why do men play? And at least one scientific answer that has been made to that is the Race

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**Recapitulation Theory.** The plays of children and men, so we are told, are but the brain reminiscences or echoes of the more serious activities of our primitive human ancestors. Why, for example, do men love to go fishing for sport? Well, our remoter ancestors had to fish for a living. And this habit, which like all other habits was registered on the brain, was thus transmitted by heredity to their descendants. It has become faint with us since our immediate ancestors did not have to fish for a living. But it has not yet been wiped off our brains. So we still have the inclination to fish for play. To quote one of the most distinguished representatives of the theory: "The pain of the toil died with our forbears; its vestiges in our play give pure delight."

And why, to use another illustration, do men love for sport to play with a ball, to throw it as we do in baseball, to hit it with a club as we do in baseball, in tennis, in croquet, in polo, in golf? Well, because our ancestors had to stone and club their prey for a living. And this brain track formed by their habitual necessity still lingers as a hereditary reminiscence or echo in our brains. And this, the race recapitulation-

ists believe, is the secret of why boys and men still love to club a ball for sport.

It is, however, not a theory which makes any great appeal to me. And Professor Groos, who is the great authority on the psychology of play, repudiates it.

But if this more or less evolutionary theory of the instinct of play is a very questionable one, if we need not trace our desire for play to the activities of any animal or savage human ancestors, perhaps we shall come nearer the truth of the matter if we trace it to our kinship with our Divine Ancestor. We are justly glad and proud to have been made in the Divine image. And we think that righteousness and love are special marks of that image. And that is true. But let us not forget that one of the qualities on which men most pride themselves is on being "game." Well, God is all that is best in men. That is how and where they have gotten it. It is because He is "game" first that any man is so at all. And why should we not believe that the love of sport comes from Him, too? Playing ball! Why He has made all sorts of balls yonder in the sky "for His own glory," big foot-balls and smaller croquet balls and still smaller

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baseballs of suns and planets which He keeps whirling through space. But the one we trust is especially identified with the game of Divine Providence, the one we think He must love the most is this little golf-ball that we call The Earth. If there be a Religion of Golf, it comes from Him. And I shall even hope to say a word presently about a Theology of Golf, too.

In asking, however, why men play, we are thinking of the purpose of it as much as of the cause. For an answer to the question "Why" may be introduced in two ways, either by "Because" or by "So that." And once we believe in an intelligent Creator of the world and of men, we want to know the purpose as well as the cause of things.

Why, then, do men play? What is the use and purpose of it? Well, first of all, men and animals play in the days of their infancy and childhood because it is a preparation for the more serious activities of life. It may not be a reminiscence of these activities. But it certainly is a prophecy of them. The young kitten, for instance, plays with a ball or piece of paper or some other object. Now as it thus plays it unconsciously uses more or less the movements

of the old cat leaping for and catching a mouse. And so the kitten, through its play, is developing and getting control of the very muscles and coördinations which it will itself need by and by in catching its prey. What would happen if a wild animal did not get this necessary practice in early life? Why, through its own unskillfulness in attack or defense, it would starve in later life or be caught and murdered by its own enemies. It is therefore a law of the Creator that play in childhood is a necessary preparation for the more serious activities of later life.

The Puritans, noble folk as they were, in their just but too extreme reaction against the frivolities of the society of their day, had blinded themselves to this. They were too inclined to look upon all pleasure and play as evidences of the sinful depravity of human nature. It must have been hard on their children. Cotton Mather, one of the Puritan divines, writes in his diary: "I took my little daughter Katy (a tot of only four years) into my Study and then I told my child I am to dye Shortly and she must, when I am Dead, remember Everything I now said unto her. I sett before

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her the sinful Condition of her Nature, and I charged her to pray in Secret Places every day. I gave her to understand that when I am taken from her she must look to meet with more humbling Afflictions than she does now." It is not with the facts of all this that our quarrel is, but with the method. For much as the Puritans thought they believed the Bible, that isn't the Bible way. How it contrasts with the happy method of Jesus who took little children in His arms and blessed them and said: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." And how it contrasts with the prophet's vision of the ideal city—a vision, by the way, which, with our streets all open to automobiles and none reserved for children, we are further from realizing than ever—: "And the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." Josiah Strong in his "Challenge of the City" writes: "Play was once regarded by the austere as a waste of time, or it was at best tolerated as innocent. Now it is recognized as a necessity. . . . We are all familiar," he continues, "with the saying of the Duke of Wellington, when in his old age he saw the boys of Eton playing football: 'There's where the battle of

Waterloo was won.' ” And Strong quotes Mr. Joseph Lee to the effect that “the boy without a playground is father to the man without a job.”

So the law of the Creator is that children shall play because it is a preparation for the serious work of life both mentally and physically. So much is plain.

But what, it may still be asked, is the why and wherefore of adult play. The answer is a kindred one. It is that men may remain fit for the serious business of life.

That means first of all health, of course. It is to prevent a man literally from “becoming a dead one” before his time. The thing that has met my observation as I go through life, though I have never tried to verify it by statistics, is that men, specially business men and professional men, die so much sooner than their wives. And the reason is, I think, that as they go from smaller things to greater, from success to success, they are able to make things materially and physically easier for their wives through the employment of household aid and the installment of greater conveniences in the home. But the same success brings only more work



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or at least the pressure of greater responsibilities upon them. What they need is the relief of relaxation.

Their trouble is not merely physical, the peril of sedentary habits, the want of physical exercise. Their peril is mental as well. I am not much of a Christian Scientist. It is too deeply ingrained in honest Saxon nature that a man must face the facts of life, however hard, as they really are. But it seems to be definitely established that bad mental states in us, anger, fear, discontent, anxiety, produce poisons in our bodily systems. And the only antidote is a mental one. We must get our minds off these cares and fears that destroy the body as well as the soul. And if we cannot fool ourselves into denying their existence, we can at least arrange to forget them for a time. The great benefit of play is that it enables us to do that. It is mentally like a draught of sleep, or a bath in the River Lethe, or perhaps still better like a case of alternate personality. For the time being you are no longer Mr. Hyde. You are Doctor Jekyll.

Now mere physical exercise in and of itself does not do this. Doctors tell us there is no

healthier exercise than walking. That is because it brings into play the large rather than the smaller muscles of our organisms. And if we could only go walking and at the same time swinging our arms in the air like a Dutch windmill, the exercise would be perfect even though our reputation for dignity and sanity might suffer a bit.

But there are two things to be said against walking as an exercise. One is that we carry our old mental selves still with us. The other is the intolerable dullness of it. Exercise, like food, loses a large part of the good it does us if we take it because we feel we ought to and not because we want to. Now the value of play, and more particularly now of golf, is not only that it makes it possible for us to walk and at the same time to swing our arms in the air like a Dutch windmill without losing our reputation for dignity and sanity but that it transforms us into a different self for the time being. It gives our old selves a rest. This is what makes it so healthy. It is better to be on the green occasionally than under it continuously. It thus keeps a man fit for the serious work of life by promoting his physical health.

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But this is only half of what it does. For play, and now more particularly golf, not only keeps a man in physical health but it is bound to influence beneficially his whole mental attitude to the serious work of life. It does this, I think, in two ways.

For first it helps to keep him mentally young. Play always does that for a man. Stanley Hall, the great American psychologist, writes: "Men do not stop playing because they grow old but men grow old because they stop playing." But while all play does that for a man there is no game that so excels in it as the game of golf. Youth is preëminently a new chance. Old age means that a new chance is now no longer possible. It is one of the many kindnesses of the Almighty to man that He has divided a man's lifetime into years and days. For this helps to continue alive in a man the feeling of a new chance. It is a perpetual succor to hope which, of the three graces, is the characteristic one of youth. It is through this device that, as the psalmist puts it, God "reneweth your youth like the eagle's." And whoever devised the game of golf, Dutch or Scotch, was a genius in that he was thinking God's thoughts after Him by

offering men who play the game a perpetual new chance. For each hole on the golf course is that. And there are eighteen of them in a single afternoon's play. A baseball game, too, to be sure, is divided into nine innings. But a hole on the golf course is much more of an individual thing than an inning in baseball. And the man who has just lost a hole to his opponent becomes once more young again in hope as he prepares to drive on the next tee.

And yet it is not that which I principally mean when I refer to the youth-renewing quality of the game of golf. What I mean is that it is the one thrilling physical game a man may hope to play and play well regardless of his age. He may not hope to beat the younger generation in baseball or football or basket-ball. He may no longer even enter the lists. But it is not at all impossible for him to beat his much younger business competitor or neighbor or even his son upon the golf links. He comes out of such a victory feeling naturally young again. And some of that consciousness he is apt to carry with him into his home life and into his business, too. Who said he was getting older? Didn't he beat his much younger junior partner

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“four up” on the golf links yesterday? It gives him confidence and poise and courage and decision the next day in business. It is bound to have an influence of that sort. And thus not merely through the benefit it is to his bodily health but because of the salubrious effect on his whole mental attitude and outlook it keeps him more fit for the more serious work of life.

And there is still another way in which all play, and not least the game of golf, has such an influence. It may help to teach a man what I may call “the play secret” of the serious work of life. No man has learned how to live until his task in life has become a sort of a game to him. What I mean was the feeling expressed by Theodore Roosevelt when he left the White House. Few people have any adequate conception of the responsibility and drudgery entailed by the great office of the Presidency. But when Mr. Roosevelt was asked, on his stepping out of it, whether he did not experience a sense of relief, he answered, No; he had thoroughly enjoyed the work; it had been real fun to him. Such men are the only real workmen there are in the world. They do not complain of their task just as a college football player

does not complain. They are too enthusiastic and happy in it. They are "game."

And that's why it is important that a man should find just that vocation in life for which he is suited. More than one such man who has found his place after previous deviation and hardship has told me that it seems just like a dream to him; that he is being paid now for the thing he had always wanted to do—just for fun. He feels like the Irish emigrant here who wrote back to his family in old Ireland that America was a grand place for a man, that he was getting good pay just for carrying mortar to another man on the upper end of the ladder who did all the work. But while it is important that a man should find his right vocation in life, I am bound to add that finding the play secret of work depends even more on the man than on the job. And I cannot help but think that the reflex influence of golf will help him find the play secret of his work.

And it finally may help him find the play secret of a Christian life. There is no man on record more full of that than Paul. Christian life means fighting our own besetting sin. But he spoke of it as if it were a boxing match with

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a worse man in himself. "I buffet my body," he says. The word buffet in the Greek in which he was writing means to give a black eye to some one. I give the worse man in me a black eye, he cries. It's a contest with himself and the spirit of the game was in it. Again, Christian life means giving. And there are some "tightwads" to whom that is an awful drudgery and even grief. But Paul writes to the Corinthians: "So let every man give not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loveth a hilarious giver." A man is no true giver until it has become like play to him. He must come to it not like to a tooth pulling but to a candy pulling. A Christian life means something of self-denial, too. It is an awful hardship to a man who isn't game. But to Paul, who didn't know the game of golf but who did know the Greek game of racing, it was only like the hardship of a race. "None of these things move me (bother me)," he shouts, "so that I might finish my course with joy." No man has learned the true secret of a Christian life until it is like a game to him.

And so at last he may face death "gamely." General Longstreet said that when General Pickett was summoned to make that fearful

charge at Gettysburg up Cemetery Ridge, he went at it with the terrible determination of a gladness that was almost gayety. "As he passed me," writes Longstreet, "he rode gracefully, with his jaunty cap raked well over on his right ear, and his long auburn locks nicely dressed, hanging almost to his shoulders. He seemed like a holiday soldier." And that meant terrible fighting; for he was going into the face of death as a game. He was "greeting the unseen with a cheer." In the words of Lucas Malet: "A true soldier of fortune marches out to meet whatever fate the battlefield of manhood may hold for him, a song in his mouth and a rose behind his ear."



## **Chapter II: A NEW RELATION**

**There was an old fellow who never had time  
For a fresh morning look at the volume sublime,  
Who never had time for the soft hand of prayer  
To smooth out the wrinkles of labor and care;  
Who could not find time for that service most sweet  
At the altar of home where the dear ones all meet;  
And never found time with the people of God  
To learn the good way that the fathers had trod.  
But he found time to die, oh, yes! he found time to die.**

**This busy old fellow, too busy was he  
To linger at breakfast, at dinner, or tea,  
For the merry small chatter of children or wife;  
But he lived in his marriage a bachelor life.  
Too busy for kisses, too busy for play,  
No time to be loving, no time to be gay,  
No time to replenish his vanishing health,  
No time to enjoy his gathering wealth.  
But he found time to die, oh, yes! he found time to die.**

**This beautiful world had no beauty for him;  
Its colors were black and its sunshine was dim.  
No leisure for woodland, for river or hill,  
No time in his life just to think and be still.  
No time for his neighbors, no time for his friends,  
No time for those highest immutable ends  
Of the life of a man who is not for a day  
But for worse or for better, for ever and aye.  
But he found time to die, oh, yes! he found time to die.**

**AMOS WELLS.**

## Chapter II: A NEW RELATION

It was at the hospital one March evening in the year 1914. An anxious husband was pacing up and down the corridor outside a room where the wife he loved had gone down, a volunteer, into the valley of peril and anguish that must precede the birth of a new life. For God counts motherhood so high a thing that He grants it only at the price of heroism. A very dear friend, the wife of an elder in the church, had been the one chosen for her wondrous grace and understanding sympathy as well as for her own brave soul to comfort and stay the sufferer in the dreaded but very sacred experience. Presently the elder's wife came running out, her fine face all lit up with a joyous enthusiasm. "He's here," she cried to the anxious husband, "He's here and he's a boy." And presently I was listening to the voice and looking into the face of a little stranger whom I had never heard or seen before but who, nevertheless, was and was to be my son. It was a new relation. Can

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I ever forget the thrill of it? It is impossible to tell all that it released in me then and throughout the years since.

Now perhaps the greatest benefit of golf is that it is a new relation.

Life is made up of relationships. Herbert Spencer once defined life as a series of correspondences, that is relationships, between organism and environment. These relationships both constitute and test a man. When a man becomes a husband, for example, it brings out or builds up a new facet in his soul. If he sustains this relationship well it not only reveals but completes his character. Even if the relationship turns out not to be a success from the standpoint of happiness, even if it be for the most part a matter of tolerance and endurance, it is, if he discharges the relationship aright, a benefit to his character. It has given him new insights, established other contacts, taught him different approaches, made him conscious of obligations of which he else would have known nothing. He married, as most people do, not to enrich his character but merely to find happiness. He is disappointed in that. But if out of it he has acquired patience and self-control

and a new sense of responsibility or learned these in new situations and with different applications, it has done much for him that he was not seeking from it. It has added a new side to his character.

Nor can one ever be sure from what a man has proved to be in one relationship what he will be in another.

Sometimes there would seem to be a fair degree of consistency between them. William Jennings Bryan, who began his career as a politician, had to the end of his days but one conception of how to remedy the ills of the world, whether intemperance or atheism or what not, and that was to get a political law passed against them. That seemed to satisfy him. Woodrow Wilson was either by nature or had become by acquisition so habitually a pedagogue dealing with minds not up to his own in the class-room, that when he became President, Congress seemed to him a school-room with himself as the appointed teacher and the United States Senate especially a class of dull and bad boys. But often all signs fail. An attractive young woman who makes an ideal friend and has proved herself to be a lovely

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daughter, without apparently any discount on those qualities, turns out to be at one and the same time an over-exacting wife and a too indulgent mother.

The chief motto of the ancient Socratic school was "Know thyself." And the importance of knowing the man I am is that it is fundamental to becoming the man I ought to be.

It requires, therefore, apparently a sufficient number and variety of relationships to reveal and, as well, to complete a man. And the value of golf is that it releases or revives, at any rate brings out, the play-side of him. He has his work-side, his love-side, his club-side, his worship-side. This is his play-side. The trouble with a number of men is that their work-side grows like a cancer at the expense of every other part of them. They merit at last, each in his own vocation, something like the familiar epitaph: "Born a man; died a grocer."

Now one of the values of golf to a man is that it may in this new side of him reveal and correct vices that were not apparent on any of the other sides of him. The rottenness is sufficiently hidden elsewhere. Here it becomes apparent

and can be dealt with. In an article by Dr. J. A. MacCallum in an issue of the *North American Review* on "Golf and Character" he tells of a "distinguished jurist" who "was in a game when his opponent lost his ball. He immediately took out his watch and waited patiently until the legal five minutes had expired. Then he promptly said, 'Your five minutes are up. Here is your ball.' A man so lacking in chivalry as that," adds Dr. MacCallum, "should shun golf as the plague, because of the fierce light it will surely throw upon the leanness of his soul." I should rather feel that that is the very sort of a man who most needs to play. Not knowing this cad, I am going to adopt the most charitable interpretation of him. Perhaps in his vocation he never does that sort of a thing. For we are all of us in our morals and manners more or less the creatures of convention. And possibly as a lawyer and a judge the ethics of his profession is so revered by him that he would not do and never does do a slimy thing like that. He is regarded as square and he thinks of himself as square. And perhaps on that side of himself he is square. Yet all this while that rottenness is there. What he needs

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most is to find it out and to realize how ugly a thing it is through the social ostracism which Dr. MacCallum says the other club members dealt out to him.

Or let us suppose, on the other hand, that a man is in some vocation where convention has weakened certain of the qualities that go to the making of a man. One strongly suspects that the judge in question had been betting on the game with his opponent and that that alien element had something to do with his unsportsmanlike conduct. Business is proverbially ruthless in its fierce competition because business has become so commercialized. Business men have themselves come to excuse it with the conventional moral sophism that "business is business." What do such men need more than a new baptism into fairness and chivalry in some new and unspoiled relationship like golf?

And if the first value of this new relation is that it may once more light up the luster of moral qualities that have been dimmed by conventions elsewhere, there is a second. The game of golf will afford a new level of social worth and prestige. It will do for many a man high up in the social and financial scale what



the war did for many a young man at that end of the social gamut. It put him on a level with the humblest of his fellows. He was sometimes even perchance a subordinate to a man who worked in his father's factory. It does a millionaire good to know that he is only a "dub" on the golf links by the side of some man whom he has always regarded as a "dub" in the money market. What every successful man needs to realize is that his particular brand of success is only one of many kinds of success. It would be like a moral bath for an overpaid business man to understand how poor a doctor or teacher he would be, vocations that probably require a higher order of ability than his own. It is refreshing in these days of the inflated values of science and invention to see a keen writer like Papini finding fault with Leonardo da Vinci for having spent any of his time in mechanical inventions and science. "I could wish," says Papini, "that Leonardo had painted one more canvas and left a hundred less precepts. . . . Botanists and engineers of our own day can draw plants and plans of fortresses; but for the painting of certain mountainous backgrounds and for the writing of certain *pensées* there has

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been none save Leonardo—and it is sad to think that so much of his time was spent on things unworthy of his powers.”

Now the average man knows that there are other orders of ability than his own but his realization of it lacks vividness because so few men seriously try at anything but their own vocation. In golf he does, and learns to respect other than his customary social values. His money, if he be a well-to-do man, has given him an importance not only in the financial world but often an undue importance almost everywhere else; in his club, for example, or in his church. But it is of no avail to him in his golf. He has to win his way to distinction with quite other than his accustomed weapons and methods. It is this wiping out of customary social levels that is one of the benefits of this new relation.

And then there is a third thing this new relation will do for him. It will once more put him in the attitude of a learner. It is a fine thing for us, urged on us by psychologists and pedagogists, that we shall be always learning something new, something we have not known or done before at all. The value of it, they tell us, is in the mental benefit this attitude of dis-

*That money  
is that  
money for  
the world!*

cipleship is to us. When a man loses that attitude to life he becomes a "has been." It has been said that not a physician over thirty-five was willing to accept Jenner's theory and experiment of vaccination when he first came out with it. I cannot vouch for the truth of that. But we all do remember Dr. Osler's suggestion that a man over sixty be chloroformed. And Jesus said: "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God:" and again, "Except ye become as little children ye cannot enter the Kingdom of God." The cemetery has been called the greatest asset in the progress of the world. All these testimonies and many more are loud in their acclaim of the critical importance that a man's mind shall remain open and receptive to new facts and insights and accomplishments. It will give him a new humility, demand a new courage and alertness. Now I believe that men to-day remain mentally young and therefore teachable for a much longer time than our fathers did. There are perhaps several reasons for this. But I veritably believe that one of them is the game of golf. It is said that at eighty Cato began the study of Greek. Plucky old fellow! And in the book of

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Joshua we read of old Caleb, also eighty years of age, who, when the Children of Israel invaded the hostile land of Canaan, asked that he might be assigned the task of taking a peculiarly difficult mountain. Plucky old fellow! And he is a plucky old fellow, whether he be seventy or eighty, who is ready, despite other achievements in other lines, to begin at the beginning once more and say: "Let me take this bunker." For he has gotten back the mental secret of youth once more and can't be wholly a reactionary. And something of this teachableness in the one aspect of his life may penetrate to the others.

And last of all there is still a fourth thing this new relation of golf may do for a man and that is to give him a better sense of proportion. There are many men in life who take themselves altogether too seriously. One of the values of a good sense of humor to a man is that it will help him to counteract this, provided always that he has also learned to laugh at himself. The man who can't laugh at himself is in a bad way. He cannot see himself as others see him. One of the "stunts" which the students of the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary once "pulled off" was a sort of

play in which the actors impersonated the different members of the Faculty. It was the most laughable event that ever took place in those halls. But the finest thing about it all, and one that spoke eloquently for the sanity and good sense of the very remarkable body of professors, was that no one present was so convulsed with laughter as they themselves. I was not then a member of that body. But it was to such a body of instructors that I felt the Church could safely entrust the education of her sons for the ministry, men deadly in earnest about the verities of the old Gospel, but men who could also laugh at their own idiosyncrasies and foibles.

Now, next to humor, what can give a man a sense of proportion in his life like his play-side? The thing often that makes a man take himself too seriously is that one relation, that toward his work, has crowded out every other aspect and relationship of his life. How can he mentally be anything else than out of proportion? The French call that species of insanity, "idée fixe." But no matter how pompously he may strut in his work, when he takes up golf, the pomposity and the strut are almost

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bound to be taken out of him. I say "*almost* bound." For of course there are men who take their golf altogether too seriously, too, and seem never able to acquire the sense to distinguish between their work and their play. But such men are not the great majority. Many a one-sided fellow has gained a new sense of balance and proportion through marriage. And many a man has added to his mental balance still further through another new relation—golf.

He may be a fine business or professional man, a kind husband, a noble father. But here is still another relation involving his teammates, caddie, an often crowded course, hazards, and a ball that doesn't care a tinker's dam for all his prestige in all the other walks of life. He may never acquire physical proficiency in the game. He may have to be a "dub" always. But in temper and spirit he may become the best golfer on the course. In fact, part of the disciplinary value of it may be in his being a "dub" and yet a "good sport." It will be a new revelation perchance of things in him for good or evil and a new chance to be or become a Christian.

## **Chapter III: HAZARDS AND CLUBS**

The cry of man's anguish went up unto God:  
"Lord, take away pain—  
The shadow that darkens the world thou hast made,  
The close-coiling chain  
That strangles the heart, the burden that weighs  
On the wings that would soar—  
Lord, take away pain from the world thou hast made,  
That it love thee the more!"

Then answered the Lord to the cry of his world:  
"Shall I take away pain,  
And with it the power of the soul to endure,  
Made strong by the strain?  
Shall I take away pity that knits heart to heart,  
And sacrifice high?  
Will ye lose all your heroes that lift from the fire  
White brows to the sky?  
Shall I take away love, that redeems with a price  
And smiles at its loss?  
Can ye spare from your lives, that would climb unto mine,  
The Christ on his cross?"



### Chapter III: HAZARDS AND CLUBS

Somewhere about the middle of the 17th century, or a little later, a brilliant, though unlettered English Genius, was thrown into an English prison. And so it was that, not having anything else to do, he wrote one of the great English classics. It was an allegory of the Christian life. He called it "Pilgrim's Progress."

It is time that another one was being written. And I can conceive that it might be done in terms of golf if we can find the genius to write it, though we may have to put him in jail before he does it.

Now, were such an allegory to be written, one can see what might be some of the outstanding figures in it. The initial tee is the favorable and often elevated start most of us receive in life, especially those of us that have been born in Christian homes. The golf ball bears the name of Duty and our business in life is to face it squarely and concentrate on

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it no matter what the consequences. The fairway is the straight and narrow path that leads to life eternal. The different holes are various stages or stopping places in the process of our conversion and sanctification, ending in glorification at the finish. And one could find obvious spiritual applications of such common golf maxims as "slow back," "don't press," "follow through," etc.

The task I have set for myself is a much humbler one. It is the task of merely drawing religious suggestions here and there from the game. One such lesson is to be drawn from hazards and clubs.

I may begin by asking in behalf of the uninitiated, Wherein does the game of golf consist? And the simple and obvious answer is that the game of golf consists in clubbing the little golf ball from the initial mound, called a "tee," over the "fairway," where the grass is kept short, on to the smooth grassy spot, called the "green," embedded somewhere in which is the little tin cup into which the ball must drop.

Now that in itself would not seem to be, nor would it actually be, so hard a thing to do. Why not arrange a golf course smooth and

level as a croquet ground, only very wide, so wide that there would not be the least chance of getting the ball into a ditch or the long grass or any other unfavorable "lie," with a cup a foot or two wide on the green? But that would not be golf at all. No game is a game without hazards. Professor William James somewhere remarks about football that, if the aim of the game was merely to put the ball over the goal line, the team might get up at night, while the opposing team was asleep, and place the ball quietly over the line. But that would not be football. The game is to get the football across the line in face of all that the opposing team, with brain and brawn, may do to oppose it; and, moreover, to do this, hampered by certain rules and restrictions to which all football teams are committed beforehand. The same principle holds true of every game.

So every golf course is built with certain "hazards" in it: long grass on the sides of the fairway; sand holes and high hummocks in the middle of it and around the greens; and it may be creeks and ponds and trees along or in the way. And the game is, in the face of and around or over or between these obstacles, to

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club the ball from the initial mound until at last, *with the fewest strokes possible*, the ball drops with a click—sweetest music to a golfer's ears—into the little tin cup planted in the "green." There are eighteen of these greens or holes and the course to each one has its own individual hazards, so that there are no two just the same. It is these hazards that constitute the interest of the game of golf.

And that is one thing that makes golf so much a parable of life. The Divine Golfer has so arranged the course of life for us that it cannot be played without hazards.

There are hazards of love. I remember some years ago talking to a student who, though he had still a year to study, wanted to be married at once. All I said to him against its immediacy could not dissuade him. His mind was made up—for one reason chiefly. His lady love had many admirers, he felt. And he feared she might grow impatient of waiting for him and take it into her coy young head to marry some one else. It was the hazard that troubled him. Well, nearly every love affair has them. Courtship is full of them. Every love story in fiction is built around them. And after we have won

in the face of all obstacles and over every human rival, there are still other hazards. The growing menace of divorce is sufficient evidence of that. And beyond all, lurking in the shadow, is the most inevitable rival of all. It is Death.

But there are hazards of success as well in one's vocation. I have a friend engaged in the manufacture of celluloid articles. He was featuring on ladies' hairpins and combs. The bobbed hair fad came along and threatened to put him out of business. Then he turned to the making of mah jong sets. But suddenly, almost over night, that craze came to an end. The last time I talked with him he was making radio sets and parts from celluloid. He is still successful. But he has had to dig out of several sand traps to remain so. Business success is full of just such hazards as that. And other vocations have their share of them.

And there are hazards in the making of character as well. Let no one think that the mother is without them in her accepted task of training her boy to be an honorable Christian gentleman. If she could only be sure that she will get him safely past the moral perils of high school and college and on to the greens of

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devoted church membership or a happily wedded life or a diligent vocation, how much more easily she would breathe. But between the initial "tee" at her knee and those earlier "greens" lie dreadful risks. And even between these and the last "flag" there are hazards that might easily become veritable graves of lost souls.

So in the face of this, there are many human golfers who have become perplexed and even rebellious against the Divine Golfer over these hazards in the game of life. Why did He arrange the course thus? Would it not have been better to have made a course without hazards?

Well, there are some things to be said in answer to this complaint. And the first is that so He could not have made men "game." The reason men are perplexed about the way this world is run is in large part because they insist on solving the problem with a key that doesn't fit. This world is a poor and disappointing world as a poet's paradise or a lover's garden or a sick man's sanitarium or an artist's gallery. Many of these and other features enter in some measure into it. For a bit it may seem

like a lover's garden and in some selected and favored nook it may be like an artist's gallery. But none of them are the right key and to try and open the lock with any of these can only end ultimately in frustration and bitterness. But this world is a remarkable world if one takes it as a training quarters in which to make a man "game." Whatever else one may meet in life he may be absolutely sure he will be compelled to face trouble and temptation and death. If he wants a chance to be "game" this world will not disappoint him. The course is built so as to try and make a sportsman out of him. God once made us men. And from that point on it is obviously His intention to make heroes of us. He might easily take the hazards out of the course. But then the Divine Golfer could not make golfers out of us. He could then only set for us a pink tea and let us play tiddle-dy-winks.

And the second thing to be said about it all is that, were the hazards to be taken out of the game of life, all the greatest satisfactions and thrills would go out with them. I have alluded to the hazards of courtship. But what is there that fires romantic love to a white heat

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save just these hazards? And what else gives the thrill, once they have been overcome? Even in the evening of our day we love to sit around our campfires and recall them. We won her against so many and such formidable rivals. One of them was a rich man's son and could have given her every material thing. But she chose us. We won her in spite of the opposition of her relatives. We dared the old gentleman's boot and the old lady's rolling pin and she left them and their desires—for us. This made us love her with a surpassing love then and thrills us even now though the rivals are long since happily married themselves and the old gentleman and the old lady and the rest of the family have long since accomplished a volte-face and now swear by us. Suppose now you take the hazards out of it. Suppose it is only too evident that the girl and all her family are making your road smooth or indeed throwing her at you so that you do not even have to travel to her but merely stoop to pick her up at your feet. Was the Divine Golfer wise or not?

It is just so with the hazards to success. No man ever sits down at a later day to thrill him-



self and others with the story of the money he inherited. The thing he loves to think over and tell about is the handicaps and hazards he has overcome. I had a good chance to test that out one day. I stayed at the home of a millionaire who had both made money and inherited it. Note the order of my words. He had first made money. His father was a rich man but, after having given the son an education, turned him out without a penny to shift for himself. So the young man started at some of the most menial tasks. But growing weary of the hardship and the meager wage, he went to his father and asked for the loan of money to go into business. His father's answer is indelibly fixed on his brain: "Sonny, if you mean to confess that you haven't brains enough to make your way in the world, I'll support you with an allowance. But if you have, don't come to me for help." That, he told me, was what made him. And—this was the thing that thrilled him—that before his father died and he came into the inheritance, he had as much money as the father himself. It was the hazards that made the game and afforded its satisfaction.

And it is just so with the winning of char-

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acter. It cannot be done in a sheltered nook. It has to be done away from a mother's knee or her apron strings. What every mother needs to do is so to nourish her boy in religious and moral ideals and purposes that by and by he will be able to stand the moral out-of-door life. It is a risk and she may fail. But if she cannot so fortify him, what she has produced is not worth while. And it is only so that he can have any joy of his own virtue or she any abiding peace.

And then there is a third thing to be said and that is, that if the Divine Golfer refuses to take the hazards out of the course, there is one thing He does not refuse us. That is—Clubs.

For if golf has its hazards, it has its aids, too. And every golfer's reliance to get out of the hazards and the unfavorable "lies" on the course is in the different sorts and shapes of the clubs that have been made for that purpose. Not to mention them all, there is the "driver," so made that the golfer can drive his ball the greatest distance with it from the "tee." There is a club with a thick iron blade at the end, tilted at such an angle to the handle of the club, that the golfer can scoop the ball out of a sand

trap or the long, rough grass. This is called the "niblick." Then there is a somewhat similarly constructed, though a lighter club, called the "mashie," a sort of "lofting iron," to be used when not too far from the green in order to lift the ball high in the air and drop it on the green without its rolling off. And then there is a final club, called the "putter," with a head suited to roquet the ball, now on the green, into the little tin cup when the flag has been temporarily removed from it.

I am giving this very simple description for those of my readers who may know nothing about the game of golf. But in reality there is nothing that more tests a golfer's wisdom and skill than the selection and use of just the right club in any difficult or critical "lie." It will not do, for example, to use a driver in a sand trap with a high bunker hard in front. He needs a niblick here. On the other hand, to use a niblick in driving from the tee would mean an almost sheer waste of perpendicular motion to the stars, when what he most wants is horizontal distance along the earth. And, when in the rough, to know just when to use a niblick, and when a mashie, a mashie niblick,

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a mid iron or a spoon demands a finesse which only those can appreciate who know the game well.

So golf has its hazards but it has its clubs, too, and the golfer is not daunted by the former since he has the latter.

Now all this is a parable of life. For if the Divine Golfer has arranged the course with many and real hazards, He has equipped us with clubs, too. At any rate He offers these to us for the using. They are our early home training, our education and our teachers, our books, our friendships, and especially these three: the Bible, the Church and Prayer. And if a man will make a right and diligent use of these aids, there is no hazard in life can bring to him any real moral harm. Salvation for the human golfer on the links of life lies wholly in the constant use of these clubs. His salvation will not be his heredity. It does not matter how fine a golfer his father was; that will not save him. It will not be his environment. The finest course on earth will not make a golfer out of him or give him the victory at the end. It will be in his use of these clubs.

Now the trouble with many "dubs" on the

links of life is that they do not know how to use the greatest three of these clubs, the Bible, the Church and Prayer. In the background of their minds they know that there will come at last hazards when no other clubs will do. But instead of preparing for that "lie" by getting acquainted with these clubs now, they never take them out of the bag till the most dreadful of hazards looms before them. And then, knowing all the other clubs will fail them, they nervously pick out one or all of these three and begin to drive wildly at the ball. As if that could do any real good then! And as if that were golf! They have missed the finest strokes all along. Others have seen it if they have not. It is only now that it becomes apparent to them what "dubs" they have been all the while on the links of life. For religion is a niblick, to be sure, to be relied on in the awful hazards of life. But religion is a trusty mid iron, too, to be used every day in the common uses of life. And only religion is the putter at last that will land you in the cup placed by the Divine Golfer at the end of the course.

This book may fall into the hands of some man who has bidden religion farewell. He

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has discarded these three sticks from his bag long since; the Bible, the Church and Prayer. Let me say this to you, brother: You may be a fine golfer literally on a material course. But you have learned little spiritually from the game. Why be a "dub" on the links of life? And that's all you can hope to be unless you learn to use the three finest clubs given you by the Divine Golfer.

**Chapter IV: AN HONEST GOLFER  
ON THE LINKS OF LIFE**

As a golfer I'm not one who cops the money,  
I shall always be a member of the dubs;  
There are times my style is positively funny;  
I am awkward in my handling of the clubs.  
I am not a skillful golfer, nor a plucky,  
But this about myself I proudly say—  
When I win a hole by freaky strokes or lucky,  
I never claim I played the shot that way.

There are times despite my blundering behavior,  
When fortune seems to follow at my heels;  
Now and then I play supremely in her favor,  
And she lets me pull the rankest sort of steals;  
She'll give to me the friendliest assistance,  
I'll jump a ditch at times when I should not,  
I'll top the ball and get a lot of distance—  
But I don't claim that's how I played the shot.

I've hooked a ball when just that hook I needed,  
And wondered how I ever turned the trick;  
I've thanked my luck for what a friendly tree did,  
Although my fortune made my rival sick.  
Sometimes my shots turn out just as I planned 'em,  
The sort of shots I usually play,  
But when up to the cup I chance to land 'em,  
I never claim I played 'em just that way.

*When Day is Done,*

EDGAR GUEST.

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## Chapter IV: AN HONEST GOLFER ON THE LINKS OF LIFE

There are many moral qualities that challenge one in the game of golf, but the first and fundamental one is honesty.

That is what I like about science—its honesty. It has its limitations and its faults. And one of these limitations is precisely the one of which it is apt to accuse theology—the limitation of a hide-bound narrowness. But the outstanding ideal of science is its honesty. If it fails to see and state the truth, it is either because of its ignorance or its traditionalism and prejudice; not because of any real lack of honesty.

Now the fundamental moral virtue of golf is honesty. Honesty is the basis of all character whether on the golf links or off them. It is fundamental. There is not enough insistence on it in our early life, either in school or in the home. With a child the fear of physical pain is very great and with its lively

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imagination its distinction between the true and the unreal is rather feeble. And that parent makes a dreadful mistake who, through the threat of physical punishment, turns his boy into a liar at the very beginning of life. No fault his boy can commit and for which he might seem to merit parental disapproval and punishment can be as fatal to his character as making a liar of him. The first concern is that he shall be honest. All the rest must be subordinated to produce that.

Now there is no game that I know of in which honesty is at so great a premium as in the game of golf. No man can be a good sport on the golf links who does not count all his strokes or who surreptitiously changes his "lie." There are times and situations where no one will know whether he does these things but himself. For in other games, in baseball, in football, in basket-ball some one else watches him and keeps the score. But the golfer keeps his own.

And that describes well the situation in which every man finds himself in life. He has to a large extent to keep his own score. Oh, to some extent his fellows will be able to know

his outer virtues and his faults and even something of his inner feeling. But no one of his fellows will follow him even externally everywhere. And no one of them can look very far into the inner chamber of his soul. There will be secret sins in thought and even in deed on the one hand, and ideals and prayers and partial or complete inward repentances on the other hand, of which the world will know nothing. What he needs to do is to look himself and his record squarely in the face as the recording angel does it and not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think or pretend to himself that he is better than he is. He needs so to record all his whiffs and his dubs morally, the failures that were in part due to unfavorable "lies" and the disgraces when the "lie" was favorable and there was no one to blame but himself, that when he comes to the last judgment his score card will tally with that of the Recording Angel and the Divine Golfer will pronounce that, if he was a poor golfer on the links of life, he had at any rate learned the first virtue of the game; that at least he was an honest one.

Nor does even this exhaust the content of

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honesty for the man on the links. Honesty is something more delicate and subtle than merely keeping a fair and accurate record of one's strokes. It consists as much in not seeking to establish an alibi for one's failures.

I have been spending my recent summers at Elberon, the most beautiful spot on the New Jersey coast. It is a spot where three of our Presidents came for rest and recuperation—Grant, Garfield and Wilson. There are some private courses there on which scarcely ever any one seems to be playing and which are eloquent of the exclusiveness and loneliness of rich men. And then there are some beautiful public courses hard by, for Jew or for Gentile as the case may be. The courtesies of the beautiful Deal course have been extended to me each summer and I have spent many happy hours there. There are some fine water hazards. The caddies are the best trained and most gentlemanly as well as most efficient of any I have seen anywhere. And the course is frequented by some of the splendid Christian men of my summer congregation.

I was on these golf links one day a summer or two ago with a ministerial friend who was

my guest for the day. Just ahead of us there was a foursome. I noticed that one of the four was using a lot of lost motion in all of his strokes, what in architecture is sometimes called "ginger bread." I never have been an admirer of it anywhere. There is a place for hesitation in life before each stroke but not for a regular hesitation waltz before each one. I do not like to see a baseball pitcher go through too many antics and contortions before delivering the ball. It always gives me the impression of weakness. I can never forget the simple and unaffected delivery of the premier pitcher of all baseball history, Christy Matthewson. So this golfer, with all the fuss and feathers and furbelows in his form, did not impress me very much.

But this was after all only a minor thing. And the man would have passed at once out of my memory. But presently he did another thing. When my friend and I arrived at the fourth tee the foursome was just driving off. So my friend and I stopped a little distance from the tee, my friend just behind "the ginger bread" man as he drove. He dubbed his drive. And then he turned and glared for a long

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moment with indignant eyes at us as if we were to blame for it all for standing there. His second shot he dubbed again, getting out of the rough only to drop into a sand trap. And then from that distance he turned around once more to glare at us angrily, in silence to be sure—for I don't know with what he could have charged us—but in silence "both loud and deep." It was plain to see that he was seeking an alibi and we were the alibi. It reminded me of a cartoon I once saw in the *Chicago Tribune*. It was a cartoon of a golfer who made a mighty swing at the ball and landed it about ten feet. In the next picture he had turned on the caddie and roared: "Caddie, stop breathing so hard."

Now that's what I mean by dishonest golf; blaming one's failures on some one or something else, the poor grounds or one's clubs, or the caddie or anything else but one's self. That, as well as vitiating the score, is dishonest golf.

And such unsportsmanlike golfers there are in the great game of life, too. The first of these human golfers was Adam. How he dubbed his first shot. But instead of owning

*And he dubbed his first shot "I never heard!"*

himself a "dub" he tried at once to establish an alibi. He said, "It was the woman thou gavest me that was at fault." And I wonder whether there are any of my male readers who are wont to do the same, or if you haven't said it, whether you have thought it. Rather poor sportsmanship, don't you think?

And that is what I like about David. He was an honest golfer on the links of life. What a dreadful error he made. How terribly he dubbed one shot—professional golfer that he was, too. He has been the object of ridicule for many an amateur on the links ever since because of that one disgrace. But when the Divine Golfer, through the Prophet Nathan, confronted him with it, David at least did not try to establish an alibi. He did not, like Adam, try to put it on the woman or on any one or anything else. He said: "I have sinned, I have sinned against the Lord." And dwelling in greater length on it in that heart-broken penitential psalm, the fifty-first, he cries: "For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when

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Thou speakest and be clear when Thou judgest." That was just a plain honest manly plea of guilty in the court. That was not trying to establish any alibi. He had made an awful stroke. But he was at least an honest golfer on the links of life.

And that is what I like about Grover Cleveland. In his first campaign for the presidency, one of the vilest mud-slinging campaigns that has disgraced our politics, his foes unearthed a scandal concerning him in the days of his youth and some of his friends perturbed, fearing it might beat him for the presidency, telegraphed to him, "What shall we do about it?" His answer has become historic, "Tell the truth about it." He, too, needed to pray with the psalmist: "Remember not the sins of my youth." He had made a poor score on one or more of the earlier greens. Like David, his was no fine record all through. But like David, Grover Cleveland was an honest golfer on the links of life.

And that is what a man must be in the eyes of the Divine Golfer if he is to be the recipient of the Grace of Redemption. He must have no alibi. The world to-day is full of



alibis for sin. One man calls it only an "error of mortal mind." Another, being a thorough-going evolutionist, calls it a mere "lack of growth." A third calls it a brain twist. A fourth calls it a psychological complex. Men seek to lay the blame on heredity, on environment, on the laws of matter, on society. And there is no hope of Divine Redemption for a sinner with an alibi. Jesus once said that He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. When the prodigal son returned from the far country in Christ's wonderful parable he had no alibi. He didn't say: Father, I have sinned but it was only an error of mortal mind. Don't think it and it will not be. He didn't say: Father, I have sinned but it was only a little lack of evolution. I or the race will outgrow that by and by. He didn't say: Father, I have sinned but it is due to some malformation of the brain which I have probably inherited from you. There is this, at least, to be said for him, that he had no alibis whatever. He said: "Father, I have sinned and am no more worthy to be called thy son." That was what opened the Father's heart and arms to him. It is only when a man feels that he is

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a "dub" on the links, that his faults are not in the course or the caddie or the clubs but in himself, that God can do something with him through redeeming love to make of him the man he ought to be. No liar on the links of earth can qualify for the courses that lie beyond the river.

## Chapter V: THE DEMOCRACY AND COURTESY OF GOLF

He doesn't believe in the bogey cult; a round to him is  
a round—  
Just so many hacks and so many hews and so many miles  
of ground;  
He is out for his rights and his money's worth, and he  
gets them every time,  
But I've heard a name for his selfish game which I  
couldn't repeat in rhyme.

A deaf and very determined four may hold the man at  
bay  
But golf, they'll learn, with a fiend astern is a damned  
hard game to play;  
For his shout will come on the short approach, and his  
yowl in the ticklish putt,  
Till their temper's gone and they wave him on, and pray  
that his mouth be shut.

*Golfers I Don't Like.*

R. THOROLD.

*Permission The American Golfer.*

**Stand up, you Strong! Touch glasses! To the Weak!**  
The Weak who fight: or habit or disease,  
Birth, chance, or ignorance—or awful wreck  
Of some lost forbear, who has drained the cup  
Of passion and wild pleasure! So! To these,  
You Strong, you proud, you conquerors—stand up!

They cannot build, they never break the trail,  
No city rises out of their desires;  
They do the little task, and dare not fail  
For fear of little losses—or they keep  
The humble path and sit by humble fires;  
They know their places—all these fighting Weak!

Yet what have you to show of tears and blood,  
That mates their blood and tears? What shaft have  
you,  
To mark the dreadful spots where you have stood,  
That rises to the height of one poor stone  
Proclaiming one poor triumph to the blue?  
Ah, you have nothing! Then stand up and own!

And yet you shall not pity them! They bear  
The stripe of some far courage that to you  
Is all unknown—and you shall never wear  
Such splendor as they bring to some last cup;  
You do not fight the desperate fight they do;  
Then—to the Weak! Touch glasses! standing up!

*To the Fighting Weak,*

**MARGARET STEELE ANDERSON.**

## Chapter V: THE DEMOCRACY AND COURTESY OF GOLF

I have always not only greatly admired but loved the Scotch. I am quite in sympathy with the old Scotchman who, meeting a young American, said to him: "And to what coontrie do you belong?" "To the greatest land on earth," jauntily remarked the American. "Puir mon," replied the Scotchman shaking his head sadly, "Puir mon, ye hae lost yir accent."

It is great land and a most attractive accent. In one of my pastorates there was a fine Scotch elder. His name was Noble. But his name did not surpass his character. He was one of God's noblemen. And he hadn't lost a bit of his accent. At our elders' meetings I used to make him lead in prayer quite more than his turn because I dared hope that God loved that accent as much as I did and would be the sooner disposed to hear and answer a man who hadn't lost it. America owes an incalculable debt to the goodly sprinkling of Scotch here who

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neither in a spiritual nor in a literal sense have lost their accent.

It has been said that what to so large an extent has made the Scotch character is the game of golf. Dr. J. A. MacCallum writes in another article in the *North American Review*: "Recently I made an important discovery in social psychology which I am glad to give unpatented to the technical sociologists for further elucidation. I have happily hit upon the reason for the preëminence of the Scots as philosophers, statesmen and theologians. This is due to their having been golfers for a sufficient number of generations to have inherited a large unearned increment from the game." It is through the game of golf, Dr. MacCallum feels, "that the Scot has learned to make those subtle distinctions between swans and geese, and other confusingly similar entities which lift him to the high place he holds in the councils of the thinkers and theologians." "If, on the other hand," concludes Dr. MacCallum, "such a noisy and turbulent game as baseball, with its swiftness of action so destructive to meditation, had been developed in Scotland, doubtless they would

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have been importing their preachers instead of exporting archbishops and cabinet officers to England, and like ourselves would have been under the necessity of organizing Chautauquas and inventing other mechanics of culture."

I trust, now, that in the face of all this glory, which I gladly concede, it will not seem to my Scotch friends a mean thing if I remark that golf did not originate in Scotland but in Holland. And Scotland will have to divide with Holland the debt which in this, as in many other regards, America owes to Protestant Europe.

In a beautiful district of Southwestern Michigan, on the shores of the great lake that bears the same name, is a settlement of Hollanders. The first settlers came in 1847. They came led by two ministers of the Free Church of the Netherlands. Their motive, like that of the Pilgrim Fathers on the shores of Massachusetts, was a religious, not a commercial one. They sought a refuge where they might escape the oppression of the State Church of their native country and worship God according to their conscience. They founded the city of Holland, Michigan, a town now of about

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15,000, a model of Dutch thrift. The town is located on one of the most beautiful little lakes to be found anywhere in our land. At the eastern end of it is the city of Holland. At the western end it opens into Lake Michigan and the harbor is flanked by two summer resorts, Macatawa Park on the one side, Ottawa Beach on the other.

On the shores of this lake, which is about six miles long from Holland at the one end to Lake Michigan on the other, are beautiful homes and some more unpretentious cottages. It is my good fortune to be the owner of one of the latter. It is often a minister's ill fortune not to possess a home of his own like other men. For his congregation provides a manse for him while he serves them. And both he and they know that by and by in the natural course of events, either because the congregation has become tired of him or for some equally good reason, he must move on. But in the heart of man lies a deep-grained instinct to possess as his own a little bit of this earth which God once gave to the first human forefather. Professor William James says that: "Even those religious orders who make the most stringent vows of



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poverty have found it necessary to relax the rule a little in favor of the human heart made unhappy by reduction to too disinterested terms. The monk must have his books; the nun must have her little garden, and the images and pictures in her room."

So, having no home of his own in any place where he ministers, there is many a preacher who satisfies his homing instinct by becoming the owner of a little cottage where he may spend his summers and, perhaps, his last days.

The summer vacation of every man is a very precious time to him. There is a time for everything, as Solomon reminds us. And this is the time when he ought to loaf and play and not to work.

And into this playtime, three or four summers ago, broke the foremost citizen of Holland and his charming young wife. He is a former congressman, a distinguished lawyer, and the most talented and eloquent of all Michigan's array of orators. The occasion for which he came was an eventful one locally. The thrifty young Hollanders of the city of Holland, having long since been imbued with the spirit of America, had built a golf course in the eastern

G. J. Diekema

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environs of the city and were about to celebrate the laying of the cornerstone of their clubhouse with a basket picnic. Through this congressman as their spokesman they were inviting me to make an address on the occasion.

The congressman found, as he anticipated, a most reluctant minister. So, to add to his own by no means small persuasive eloquence, he had brought along his fascinating wife. The human brain, we are told, is mapped out in various areas, connected with the various senses, such as of hearing, of smell, etc. The Protestant Church of the Reformation, in its reaction from the Roman Church, probably swung too far in the other direction and perhaps not least in this respect that it makes its characteristic appeal to only one sense, that of hearing. The Roman Church is in this regard more psychological in that it makes its appeal to the sense of sight and smell as well. And my friend, the congressman, though himself a pillar in a Protestant Church, proved himself a good psychologist by bringing his wife with him. For, at the end of each of his persuasive paragraphs aimed at the lazy and reluctant minister, he had timed for his good-looking wife to beam

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her most winsome smile. Moreover, she had a bouquet that wafted its incense as a sort of unspoken prayer up to the nostrils of their hearer. And presently my whole cerebrum, occipital, olfactory as well as auditory regions, was in one quivering harmony of siege. And there was nothing to do but to cry "Kamerad."

But it is hard during vacation time to concentrate on an address. And I did not find my cue and my stimulus till the day before the dedication service. On that day I was golfing with my ministerial chum on the Ottawa Beach Resort golf course at the other end of the little lake from Holland. The course was crowded that day. There were three ladies playing behind us and a twosome of men ahead of us. Presently a quartette of golf Huns showed up behind us. They had walked right through the three ladies without so much as begging leave. And now they were dropping their balls right ahead of us and shouting "Fore." They were good golfers, better than we, and so they seemed to feel they owned the links. So on they came swaggering and swearing and swiping the course. And though we knew it would not do them much good for us to let them through

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since the course ahead of us was crowded, my chum said to me: "Let's let these ruffians through. I would rather do that than to listen to their talk." So we did.

But we had not entirely escaped their talk after all. For, since the course was crowded, we caught up with them and had to wait for them at every tee. And the more we saw of them the more our indignation over their lack of golf manners grew. Presently, at one tee I heard one of them speak of the basket picnic that was to be held at the new Holland golf course, the next day, a few miles away. I said to my friend: "I believe those rough-necks are really going to be at the dedication picnic and program of the new golf course to-morrow. I am going to make a speech there and these fellows will 'get theirs' if they are there."

The next afternoon a goodly company had gathered for the laying of the cornerstone of the club-house on the new Holland course. A platform had been erected for the speakers. My friend, the congressman, presided. There were two speakers. I was to make the first address. And then was to come the *pièce de résistance*, an address by a United States Sen-

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ator from Michigan. After that, some of the best golfers were to give us an exhibition of driving from the first tee on to the first green. And then there was to be the basket picnic.

As I sat on the platform overlooking the crowd, before the moment had come for me to speak, sure enough, I noticed the leader of the four rough-necks who had been so much in evidence the day before. True to form, he sat on the front seat and I suppose his companions may have been there too. Well, for once in his life, at any rate, he heard a sermon at the application of which he did not need to guess. For I made it for him. I spoke to the young golfers of Holland of the benefits and the responsibilities and the manners of the game of golf. And I urged them, when they should have become proficient in the game, not to become conceited fools, swaggering down the course as if they owned it and no poorer and humbler players had any rights there. And then I told them of the four golf hogs whom I had experienced the day before on the Ottawa Beach course. I owned my ignorance of who these men were but thought they might be Prussian Junkers, for they acted as if they

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owned the earth. At least, I avowed, such swaggerers could not be Americans, since they evidently did not know the first principles of politeness and democracy; and I expressed the hope that no such bullies would ever disgrace the Holland golf course. It was strong medicine for at least one of my hearers. And for once, at any rate, a sermon took immediate effect. He never even waited to hear the address of the United States Senator or to partake of the basket picnic that was to follow. As soon as I had finished, he pulled his cap down far over his head and slunk back through the crowd out of sight and was seen no more.

Now the temptation for a man as he becomes an outstanding golfer to be a Czar or Kaiser on the course is no uncommon one. For just what reason his proficiency on the course gives him a greater right on it than his less skillful brother it might be difficult for him to show. But it requires true Christian grace for him not to have that feeling or to display it. I notice, for example, on the course where I most frequently play, that the changes in the course which are made from time to time are all made in the interests and to suit the tastes of the 10

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per cent of proficient golfers and not in the interests or for the tastes of the great 90 per cent. It leads one to suspect that the Junkers are somehow in control. And what in part at any rate I mean by a Christian golfer and the religion of golf is that a man shall know and act something of the true democracy and courtesy of golf.

And this, of course, has its larger application to life. The one great temptation of a very successful man in whatever line is the temptation either outwardly or inwardly to swagger, the feeling that somehow or other he owns the course. It is true in any vocation. But perhaps in our day it is true mostly of the two lines of endeavor that have most had their innings, business and science. There is a snobbery and effrontery about some so-called scientific men to-day that is hard to tolerate. They have all but swaggered art and poetry and romance and religion off the course entirely. What was so refreshing about Professor William James, whom I have had occasion to quote in this little volume, was his democracy. No hidebound traditions or conventions of an over-materialistic science could ever close his mind to any

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truth from whatever quarter. He was an unquestioned expert but a very democratic and courteous golfer on the links of truth.

And now and then one meets such a man among the kings of business, too. I stood in the office of such an one one day. He had just given a large sum to the institution to which I belong, a sum so large that the interest of it would pay continually the salary of a new professor whom we very much needed. He was always doing things of that sort in quiet ways that none but the very few initiated knew and they often only because they stumbled on his good deed unexpectedly. I tried to thank him for this and all the fine things he was doing. But I stopped. For, looking at his face, it seemed as if pain and embarrassment were struggling there. At last he spoke. He said: "Please do not speak of it. It is such men as the professors in your institution that are making the real sacrifice and doing the real work of the world." What a triumph of Christian grace it is when an expert golfer on the links of life displays a humility and a democracy and a rare courtesy like that! I wondered what the secret was of this man's grace. I did not know



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until some months later, in a secular paper, I read the last clause of his father's will. Here it is: "With implicit faith in God, who rules over the Nation as well as individuals, and whom I have tried to serve, I commit my children to His care. It has been my policy to treat my Creator as my partner in all of my business affairs, and it is my desire that my children will not dissolve the partnership that I entered into in 1875, and which partnership has been so satisfactory to me all along through these many years; and I pray that they will acknowledge His leadership and follow the teachings of His spirit and that they will use the small inheritance that I have been able to provide for them, under His leadership, without abusing the trust. All I have is His, and I simply commit a part of it to my dear children to use for their comfort and His glory and for the upbuilding of His Kingdom, asking Him to help them to multiply and increase their faith and to supply His Grace that they may all meet me in Heaven."

Mammon was the greatest temptation that the Saviour feared for men. And the good Book tells us the love of it is the root of all evil. But with God all things are possible. And the

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finest and strongest men God ever makes are those that have met this temptation and have won. In the expression of Jesus, they have gone through the eye of the needle. They have learned that to be a King in the sight of God is a matter of character more than possession; that wealth is no measure of worth; and that one of the greatest secrets of character and worth, perhaps the hardest for an eminently successful man to learn, is that of a democratic courtesy to his humbler fellows.

## Chapter VI: "DON'T PRESS"

To every man there openeth  
A Way, and Ways, and a Way,  
And the High Soul climbs the High Way,  
And the Low Soul gropes the Low,  
And in between, on the misty flats,  
The rest drift to and fro.  
But to every man there openeth  
A High Way, and a Low,  
And every man decideth  
The Way his soul shall go.

*The Ways,*  
JOHN OXENHAM.

**Do not pay too much attention to the stupid old Body.  
When you have trained it, made it healthy, beautiful, and  
your willing servant,**

**Why, then do not reverse the order and become its slave  
and attendant.**

**(The dog must follow the master, not the master  
the dog.)**

**Remember that if you walk away from it and leave it  
behind, it will have to follow you—it will grow by  
following, by continually reaching up to you.**

**Incredibly beautiful it will become, and suffused by a  
kind of intelligence.**

**But if you turn and wait upon it—and its mouth and its  
belly and its sex-wants and all its little ape-tricks—  
preparing and dishing up pleasures and satisfactions  
for these,**

**Why, then, instead of the body becoming like you, you  
will become like the body,**

**Incredibly stupid and unformed—going back in the path  
of evolution—you too with fish-mouth and toad-belly,  
and imprisoned in your own members, as it were an  
Ariel in a blundering Caliban.**

**Therefore quite lightly and decisively at each turning-  
point in the path leave your body a little behind—**

**With its hungers and sleeps, and funny little needs and  
vanities—**

**Pay no attention to them;**

**Slipping out at least a few steps in advance, till it catch  
you up again,**

**Absolutely determined not to be finally bound and weighed  
down by it.**

*The Stupid Old Body,*

**EDWARD CARPENTER.**

## Chapter VI: "DON'T PRESS"

There is no more beautiful element in the Religion of Golf than *A Fine Restraint*. This virtue, added to honesty and courtesy, completes a fine trinity in the game of golf. One of the chief rules to be remembered by the golfer about to hit the ball is, "Don't Press." It means that he must not try to get too much out of his stroke. If he does, he gets less distance instead of more. There must be in him *A Fine Restraint*.

Now this maxim, applied usually to the single stroke, is one that deserves a wider range in and a larger application to the literal game of golf itself.

For first of all, the golfer must not press his golf game, his golf ambition and golf enthusiasm into the time he ought to take for the more serious work of life.

One day, at the Louisville Country Club, a number of years ago, there appeared a tall, black-haired, slightly round-shouldered man of

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between thirty-five and forty. He had put on his golf clothes and was hoping for a man who would make a twosome with him around the course. Presently there drove up a considerably older man, the president of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. He, too, was looking for a partner. "Why not take on that tall, young fellow over there," said one of the attendants to him. "Who in the H—l is he?" said the railroad president, whose language was apt to be more forceful than elegant. "Why," said the attendant, "he is the new preacher at the Warren Memorial Church." "I'll bet he is a d—n poor golfer," ejaculated the president. But the tall young preacher was a golfer second to no man in Louisville or Kentucky and the railroad president was nowhere when they had finished the eighteenth hole together. "What do you think of him now," said the attendant. "I'll bet he is a d—n poor preacher," retorted the president. Well, the railroad man was wrong both times. But, despite his profanity, which was inexcusable, there was something in his homely philosophy of life nevertheless. There are many preachers of whom that is proving precisely true. They may do fairly well as

preachers but they will never achieve the success there is in them because they consume too much time on the golf links. It is just as true of men in other vocations, business men and professional men. There is nothing that a man needs so much for complete success in life as a sane and fine sense of the proper proportion of things. There are some fine fellows in life whose trouble is with their mental semicircular canals. They lack balance. They get to live in topsy-turvy land and a thing of amusement, like golf, gets to absorb the joy and enthusiasm which they ought to get out of their business. It is, moreover, true, that an older man, who has won his way and achieved, may be pardoned a more leisurely attitude to life than one who has yet to win his spurs. If, therefore, a man is to get the blessing and not the curse from golf, he must learn the full use of this maxim, “Don’t press”; don’t press your golf game into the more serious work time of life. Let there be in you a fine restraint.

And don’t press it into your home and family life either. For, if a man’s golf game isn’t as important as his vocational life, it isn’t as important as his family life. Indeed, I think it of

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more value that a man should be a success in his family than in his vocation. It would be a fine thing for our nation if there could be aroused as widespread and intense an ambition in men to be a success in their homes as to be a success in business. It is about time that the home was having its inning. And it will not do for a man to let the romance die out of his home or to let his children grow up without a father while he is enthusiastically neglecting them for golf. Don't press.

And don't press your golf into your religion. No man is much of a man if he be not religious. For religion, it is agreed by students of human nature, belongs to a man as such. For a man to be lacking in it means that there is lacking in him not only something that is essentially human, but something that is the highest and holiest among things human. It is a poor compliment to a man's manhood if the highest in him has been sacrificed to his mere bodily life. There will be afternoons and mornings when the Divine Golfer means you to be on the golf links. But don't take your game out of your Sabbath worship, which God gave you for the higher things in you. He, the Lord of all sport,



**set men** forever an example. Even He didn't press His game into that day. We read: "He rested on the Sabbath day." Then, too, it is hardly fair for a man to expect God's blessing on his own children when he is a party to a habit that keeps his caddies from the one institution and the knowledge of the one Book they need most for this life and the other. Moreover, there is nothing that will be such a moral tonic to a man, if indeed he cares anything about this higher side of his nature, nothing that will be such an antidote against mere self-pampering, and so gird him with moral courage among his fellows as to do what made the great baseball pitcher, Christy Matthewson, a man—refuse to play on the Sabbath day.

For remember, it is a rule with a broad application that by "pressing" you do not get more out of anything, especially, too, not more enjoyment, but less. It isn't the glutton that gets most enjoyment out of his food, or the flirt or the rake that gets the most happiness out of love. To get the most out of anything, whether it be a particular stroke or the game as a whole or life in general, there must be something better in a man than a weak indulgence and aban-

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don; there must be a fine restraint. It is to his golf game as well as to his sweetheart that a man may well address these words:

“I could not love thee, dear, so much  
Loved I not honor more.”

Don't press.

And I cannot think but the same rule holds good of a man's loss of temper and of decent speech on the golf links.

I have never been able to feel that swearing was one of the worst sins in the catalog. But I have never been able to see just what a man gets out of it. It does seem to argue a certain intellectual as well as moral weakness in him. At the opening of this century Senator Beckham represented the best elements in Kentucky politics. He was the youngest governor the state ever had, perhaps the youngest any state ever had. He was honest, he was fearless and he had unquestionable ability. All good men in Kentucky should have followed where the gallant young *Beau Sabreur* led. But there were some of the old Kentucky “colonels” that couldn't do it. They loved their toddy too much and this the young statesman was threatening

to take away. Among these recalcitrant “colonels” was the well-known, but over-rated, editor, Henry Watterson. One morning, in his paper, Editor Watterson poured forth a foul torrent of billingsgate against Senator Beckham. And a pagan Daily from pagan New York administered Henry Watterson a keen rebuke when it remarked that it had always been thought that Mr. Watterson prided himself on his mastery and use of the English language; but it seemed to this Daily that his mind and mastery must be failing, since he had now to resort to billingsgate to express himself. It requires no mental capacity to call another a liar. But it takes some mental subtlety to say what one United States Senator said of another senator: “I will not say that the gentleman lies; he tells the truth as it lies in his mind.” It takes no ability to say to another: “You are the biggest ass in the world.” But it takes mental acumen to retort: “You forget yourself, sir,” leaving it wholly in doubt whether the emphasis was intended to be on the second word or on the third.

So the man that swears generally seems to me a sort of weak sister. But it is especially

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true of a man who loses his temper and swears on the golf links. For there may perhaps be occasions when it is fitting for a man to lose his temper and give vent to a volley of oaths. That is what an officer, who was present at the battle of Monmouth, when Lee had nearly betrayed the American cause, said of George Washington. He said: "You should have heard him. He swore magnificently. He swore like an angel from heaven. The very leaves on the trees trembled. I never heard such fine swearing in all my life." But if a man is to lose control of his temper and swear, then, in the name of plain common sense, let him do it for some more serious cause than anything that is apt to happen on the golf links. The man who loses control of his temper and his tongue over nothing more significant than his dubbing a ball is something more than a blasphemer. He is also considerably of a fool. It may be a splendid thing to treat the more serious work of life as if it were a sort of game. But it is exceedingly childish for a man to treat a game as if it were the serious work of life. So in this regard, too, what a man needs to be a good golfer is a fine restraint. Don't try to make more of

the game than there is and ought to be in it. Don’t press.

And, once more, I think that the man who rightly appreciates the wisdom and sporting character of this maxim will have the good sense and the courage to refuse to gamble on his game. For to bet on it for stakes high or low is to commercialize his game to that extent. And when a game or sport is commercialized it loses, to that extent, its character as pure sport. The man who does it apparently does not have enough good sporting blood in him to let the pure zest of the game itself be the thrill of it for him. He shows that he is growing old in spirit. And that is far worse than growing old in body. His appetite for pure sport has become so jaded that he must summon his usual ruling passion for money to come in and augment and stimulate him. He would be a better sport if he didn’t have to do that. Poor old Money-Bags! What he needs in this respect, too, is a fine restraint. He is trying to get out of his game what ought not to be in it. Don’t press.

And this golf maxim is a fine rule to remember for the whole game of life. There are certain major interests in life, the things, as Dr.

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Cabot says, "by which men live." They are such interests as work and love and friendship and books and religion. And each one of these is a big thing and fine in its place. And yet each one may be pressed too far.

In the church of my boyhood days there was one couple that even so early excited my boyish risibilities. He was a scrawny, little man; she was a big, fat woman. I shall call them Jiggs and Maggie. Maggie ruled the roost. There was no question of that in any one's mind, though Jiggs, with a last relic of male pride, would like to have concealed it better. But one day some ill-advised friend over-stimulated the small particle of rebellion that was still left in Jiggs and said to him: "Before I would let myself be bossed by my woman I'd take a stick to her back." The literal-minded Jiggs accepted the challenge and the next time Maggie gave him his orders, to her amazement, he responded by belaboring her with a stick. She fled to the neighbors as fast as her fat and her asthma would permit and sent for my father, who was the minister of the country church, and for an elder. But when they arrived on the scene Maggie was not only back on her accustomed

throne but serene in her forgiveness of the now subsided Jiggs. “For,” said she, in the presence not only of father and the elder but of Jiggs himself, “for, Dominie, some men have so much sense” (putting her left front finger on her right elbow); “and some so much” (putting the same finger on her right wrist); “but my husband (putting the left finger on the first joint of the right forefinger) hasn’t more than so much.” And Maggie’s philosophy would cure half the troubles of our married life. Professor William James has said that happiness is a fraction of which the numerator is what one has and the denominator is what one expects. And one can increase the sum total of his happiness either by increasing the numerator or by decreasing the denominator. The unhappiness of married life arises from expecting too much of one another. One must learn not to let the denominator of expectancy become too big. There is a great fund of joy to be gotten out of married life. But to get the most out of it there must be on the part of the two who play the game together a fine restraint.

And that is just as true of friendship. Many, at least, of the quarrels and disappointments

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that arise between friends occur because either one or the other has pressed the friendship too far. Among the noble spirits I have been privileged to meet in life, one of the noblest is a friend without the friendship of whom this world would have meant much less to me. He has helped keep alive my faith in men. I asked him one day how it was that he had so courageously resisted the prevalent habit of gambling on his game of golf. He replied: "I tell men when they ask me to play for ten cents or twenty-five cents a hole that I can get all the kick out of the game that I can possibly expect by playing just for fun and the exercise, and I positively refuse to do it, and I don't think I have offended anybody by refusing." He don't press. He is a successful business man, the manager of a knitting factory in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is a devoted husband, an ideal father, a loyal worshiper and servant of his Church, a consecrated patron of the boy's work in the Y.M.C.A., and in friendship he is a prince. He is less of a knocker and more of a booster and gets more out of life than any one I know. I have asked myself the secret of it. And I think it is because he doesn't press any



one of these relationships beyond that which they can endure. Every minister has certain friends in his church whose friendship is conditioned on his remaining their pastor and thus doing what they want him to do. As soon as in that or in other regards he does not do their will, their friendship ceases. I have had such friends, too. This man’s friendship is not so conditioned. That’s why it remains true throughout the years. That’s why his own life has had so little of bitterness and so much of joy in it. That is why God and all men love him. He is a good golfer on the links of life. He doesn’t press.

And, finally, this rule is one for life, this earthly life in general. It contains much for every man who will live it aright. But not even for the man who lives it aright was it meant to contain everything. The men who have become cynical and embittered with life are men who have expected too much out of it. There is joy for every man to be had out of it, but not unbroken joy; love, but not love without any disappointments; successes, but not without failure; youth, but not endless youth. It is a pilgrimage and not an abiding possession. Life,

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as Paul put it, is a "part," a fragment of a larger whole. "In the Father's house are many rooms." It was never meant that a man should get everything out of this one. And only he can go through this life serenely and unembittered who does not seek to get out of it more than there is in it; who exercises towards it a fine restraint. Don't press.

**Chapter VII: THE THEOLOGY OF  
GOLF.**

**In the beginning God created the earth.**

**For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.**

**And upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**

**After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.**

*The Bible,*  
**THE DIVINE GOLFER.**

## Chapter VII: THE THEOLOGY OF GOLF

A big truth can never be wholly contained in one figure of speech. Just in proportion as it is true and big it lends itself to many. That was why our Saviour used so many parables to describe the Kingdom of God.

Now this is true also of the Christian theology. One may expect that, if it be a sound theology and a true theology, there will be found many illustrations of it in this life, since the same God is the author both of a sound theology and of life. And that, indeed, is one criterion by which one may test the truth of a theology. Does it meet the needs of, is it congenial with the facts of, and is it illustrated by the experiences of this earthly life? One thing emerges from this and that is that no milk-and-water theology can possibly be a true one. For life is something quite other than a milk-and-water affair.

Now Christian theology has been put in the

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figure of a law court. Paul did it. And so did Calvin. And it is a great figure. But that is not to say that there are not other good figures of it. And just here I would like to register an attempt to put the great facts of Christian theology in terms of the game of golf.

### *The Drive*

There was first of all The Drive of Creation. This was the initial stroke of God in the golf game of Divine Providence with this little ball we call our earth. And it was a tremendously long drive. It has often been said that the biggest event in the history of the universe is Redemption. But an orthodox theologian of my acquaintance counters that by asking, "What of Creation?" Science is endeavoring to tell us that it took millions of years where our fathers thought it took only thousands and our forefathers thought it took only days. But far more than the length of time is the vast amount and variety and infinite beauty of its countless forms. Yes, it was a tremendously big drive. It is no wonder that the Great Golfer and the angels who were watching at that first tee pro-

nounced it good, to the praise of the glory of God. And poets and artists and scientists, as well as theologians and all observing and thinking men, are still talking, and always will be, of that tremendous drive.

*The Niblick Stroke*

But, as I said above, there are certain hazards that go to make the game of golf. And the self-imposed Divine hazards were possibly the fact of matter and more surely the free will of man. And so, magnificent as the first stroke was, the ball, which is our earth, presently rolled into the sand trap of sin. And, though it was no fault of the Divine Golfer, save for the acceptance of the hazard of human free will, He must needs rescue it. There was but one means to that goal. It was the Niblick Club of Redemption. That was His second stroke. And what a stroke it was! Till then an uninitiated observer might well have wondered whether after all it was worth while to accept so terrible a hazard as human free will; whether it would not have been better if the initial drive of creation had stopped much short of that. But no one can have studied

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carefully the divine history of Redemption through the person and the cross of Jesus without praising the Great Golfer for having accepted the hazard. That Niblick Stroke of Redemption out of the terrible sand trap of sin—the wonder and beauty and power of it will be the glad theme of countless anthems through all eternity! “And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.” What they were praising and will be forever praising is that wondrous Niblick Stroke of Salvation out of the sand trap of sin and its condemnation.

### *The Mashie*

And then having lifted his ball out of the sand trap of sin far along on the fairway of the Kingdom, there is a third stroke of the Divine Golfer. It is the approach to the green. And



the club He chooses to use for this is a Mashie. It is the Church. For the Church is a lofting iron to lift the world out of its low things into higher things. Oh, not with such power of lifting high out of the depths as the great Niblick of the Incarnation and the Cross of Christ. For that was, beyond measure, sublime, But now that the greater work has been done by the Drive of Creation and the Niblick of Redemption, it remains true that this lofting iron, which we call the Church, is, in the hands of the Divine Golfer, a very good club, nevertheless, and in spite of the criticisms that the uninitiated sometimes heap upon it. And it is destined to lift the world along the fairway of the Kingdom to the Green of Paradise Restored that lies at the end of the way. On either side of the fairway of the Kingdom is the rough, long grass of paganism, ancient and modern. And in that "rough" is war and class hatred and all sorts of unrighteousness and selfishness that threaten the golf ball of this world with irremediable loss. And, were the ball, indeed, to be lost in the rough, no one of the angelic caddies, good and serviceable as they may be, would have such a keen eye and such a patient

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heart to seek and find as the Divine Golfer. But what He is always trying to do is, through the lofting iron of the Church, to keep the world out of the rough of paganism, along the fairway of the Kingdom that leads to the Green. With the fewest strokes possible He wants at last to land it there.

### *The Putter*

For it is for the fourth stroke that the Divine Golfer is always living. It is for the Putter Stroke of Glory: And this is to be on the Green of Paradise Restored. And that last stroke with the Putter of Glory—well, we have seen something of the first three strokes and we know something of what they are, but we have never seen and we can only dimly imagine the exceeding grace of the Putter Stroke of Glory. It passeth our comprehension. But the Bible tells us something of it, though in figurative language other than that of golf: “And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” And, for the rest, the Bible tells us, this time through another Apostle: “Eye hath not seen, neither ear

heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath laid up for those that love him."

Such, as I have tried to interpret it, is The Theology of Golf under the figure of The Divine Golfer, in four strokes: The Drive of Creation; The Niblick of Redemption; The Mashie of The Church; The Putter of Perfection on the final Green of Paradise Restored.

The figure is indeed inadequate as all figures must be. But perhaps it may be useful to those for whom the usual figures in theology have only a "lost luster." And perhaps it may be fortified a bit against objections.

For I hear some one say: "This is only the description of one hole. It takes eighteen to make a game of golf." I know so much. But I would like to plead that there are other worlds than this, possibly populated by some such beings as we are. It is not likely that this world and its history are the only ones in which some great divine drama shall be played out.

And then, too, even for us this world and its history, which I have tried to describe in golf symbols, is only one act, the first. Did not our Saviour say, "In my Father's house are many

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rooms?" And, if He had been speaking to us modern men, it is scarce likely that so outstanding a modern interest could have escaped His use as metaphor or parable. And one might conceive His saying: "On my Father's course are many holes, of which this is only the first." There are to be others and still others ahead. And if this is so, then there must be other hazards there, even if not the hazard of sin. Else there could scarcely be other triumphs. There will, at least, be other chapters, I feel, in the history of The Theology of Golf.

**Chapter VIII: GOOD SPORTSMAN-  
SHIP TOWARD GOD**

The sorrows of God mun be 'ard to bear  
If 'e really 'as Love in 'is 'eart,  
And the 'ardest part i' the world to play  
Mun surely be God's Part.

G. A. STUDDERT KENNEDY.

If you can go to Church when all about you  
Are going everywhere but to the House of Prayer,  
If you can travel straight when others wobble  
And do not seem to have a righteous care;  
If you can teach and not get tired of teaching,  
Or tell the truth when others lie like sin,  
Or pray and pay and carry heavy burdens  
Without a murmur, Sonny, you will win!

If you possess yourself and pray "God bless you!"  
When every muscle in you aches to smite,  
When something says, "Give up! Give up the struggle!  
Since others fail why stand alone and fight?"  
You'll find a Presence by you in the furnace,  
You'll find a Presence by you on the sea,  
You'll find a Presence by you in the battle,  
Yes! Everywhere and always victory!

*If,*

(With apologies to Mr. Rudyard Kipling.)

REV. WILLIAM WOOD.

## Chapter VIII: GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP TOWARD GOD

Just what do we mean when we say of a man in common parlance: "He is a good sport?" It is evident that we intend it for a compliment, just as when we call him, a "regular fellow." But just what do we mean by it? Well, I think we mean two things by it. We mean, firstly, a certain responsiveness in him and, secondly, a certain gameness.

### I

We mean first of all a certain responsiveness in him to a new adventure. It is the acceptance of a challenge to a new exploit. He must be willing to try a thing "at least once."

I received a visit last summer at the manse in Elberon, New Jersey, from a friend of mine. He is a college president. He has not learned to play many games. His life has been too busy and burdened for that. But it was for no lack

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of good sporting blood. For he accepted my challenge to every venture I suggested. I took him to the golf links and he tried that. I handed him the horse shoes for a game of quoits and he tried that. I took him to the swimming pool and dared him to abandon himself boldly to the water and float. And he did that. In fact, the second day he was actually swimming. Then, at night, we challenged him to what we feared might seem to him our silly, indoor games. And he entered heartily into these. We greatly enjoyed his visit. We all voted him "a good sport."

Now Jesus once accused the men of His generation of not being good sports. He said one day: "Whereunto, then, shall I liken the men of this generation? And to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the market place and calling to one another and saying, We have piped unto you and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you and ye have not wept."

The game to which our Saviour here referred was somewhat like our game of charades. But there was a difference. In our game of charades we divide the company into two sides oc-



## Good Sportsmanship Toward God 115

cupying different rooms. One side then selects a word and acts it out and the other side must guess from the acting what the word is. But in this game of Christ's day, one side would begin the acting of some familiar scene or custom of Jewish life and the other side, catching the idea, would finish the act.

In the particular incident to which our Lord referred, one group of children had begun by acting out a wedding scene. A wedding was quite an elaborate affair with the Jews and began with music and a procession to the bride's home. Then, out would come the bride with her company, armed with torches and myrtle branches and chaplets of flowers, and proceed, dancing and marching, to the house of the bridegroom. Now one group of children had begun the wedding game with piping and the procession. But the bride and her company refused to come forth. They were sullen and would not play. So the first group tried it again. This time they began acting out a funeral scene. A funeral, too, was quite an elaborate affair with the Jews. But the other group of children wouldn't play this scene either. They were just not good sports.

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Now our Lord said the men of His generation were like those sullen children. God was trying to play a game with them. But they wouldn't play. They were not good sports toward God.

The figure has occurred to this modern age, too, that life was playing a game with God. Huxley once used this figure:

But the sinister element in the figure of Huxley, as I remember it, was that God was too wholly an opponent. Ezra Pound, in his *Ballad for Gloom*, has a much truer and finer use of it:

For God, our God, is a gallant foe that playeth  
behind the veil;  
Whom God deigns not to overthrow hath need  
of triple mail.

I have loved my God as a child at heart  
That seeketh deep bosoms for rest,  
I have loved my God as maid to man  
But lo, this thing is best:  
To love your God as a gallant foe that plays  
behind the veil,  
To meet your God as the night winds meet be-  
yond Arcturus' pale—

## Good Sportsmanship Toward God 117

I have played with God for a woman,  
I have staked with my God for truth,  
I have lost to my God as a man, clear-eyed,  
His dice be not of ruth.

For I am made as a naked blade,  
But hear ye this thing in sooth:

Who loseth to God as man to man  
Shall win at the turn of the game.  
I have drawn my blade where the lightnings  
meet

But the ending is the same:

Who loseth to God as the sword blades lose  
Shall win at the end of the game.

For God, our God, is a gallant foe that playeth  
behind the veil;

Whom God deigns not to overthrow hath need  
of triple mail.

Now that hits the idea. God is your opponent not as one who is your enemy. God is your opponent only as one might be in a game of golf. That might be your best friend. It might be as one who is your instructor to teach you the game.

The most remarkable church I know is the

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First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. It is, under the grace of God, the achievement of one tremendous leader, the pastor, Dr. Maitland Alexander. But there are many strong and consecrated men and women in the church who have nobly seconded him. Among the most attractive couples in the church are the Chairman of the Board of Trustees and his comely wife. They radiate such a genial and gracious friendliness that they seem even to have won over Father Time. Perhaps he feels his rudeness rebuked by the very courtesy of such a gentleman and gentlewoman. So he has touched their sixty years of youth but lightly and left them in possession of their physical and spiritual grace, both.

One day, when I had preached in Pittsburgh the day before, I found this gentleman had been thoughtful enough to arrange a game of golf for me on the golf course in Sewickley, the beautiful suburb of the city. He was unable to play with me himself but he had arranged for a man to play with me, he said. And then the bottom dropped out of my ardor. For he added that the man was the "pro." It was a compliment I had not looked for and one that would never

## Good Sportsmanship Toward God 119

have been given me had my courteous friend known my game. A "dub" and a "pro" to play against each other! But that was one of the most profitable games I ever played. And I learned that the very best thing one can do in golf is to play around the course with the "pro."

Now it is only in such a sense that God is our opponent in the game of life. It is because only so can He be our real friend and teach us the game. It is by losing to Him that we learn how to win.

"Whom God deigns not to overthrow hath need of triple mail."

Now what is this game, this new adventure to which God challenges us? It is God's great adventure for us in Christ. For Christ is God's high adventure for the soul. The man who rejects or ignores Him, whatever else he does, is missing the highest possibility for his own soul.

There are four things which Christ will do for a man who, to use Donald Hankey's phrase, "bets his life" on Him.

The first, if I may resort to the figure of the game once more, is that He wipes out a man's old bad scores. It is a great need it fills in a

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man's soul for him to feel his past is forgiven. Some one asked Phillips Brooks one day: "Why does it so often happen that an atheist is a good man?" And the quick-witted Bishop replied: "He needs to be; he has no God to forgive him." But it is something more than a comfort to a man's soul to feel there is a God who has forgiven him. It is also an inspiration to do better. Jesus understood that when He preceded His "Go and sin no more," with, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

The second thing this venture with Christ does for a man is to correct the faults of his "form." It changes his "stance." It changes a man's attitude to life, to the Divine Golfer most of all. These wrong attitudes have been a hindrance to him in the game of life. But now, to use Paul's expression, "Old things have passed away; all things have become new."

The third thing it does for a man is to release and develop new possibilities in him. His moral drive is farther; he is less often in the "rough"; he approaches the green more confidently. No man knows how much better a player he would make in the game of life till he has wholeheartedly tried it with Christ.

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And lastly, it opens for him a greater destiny. To a man without Christ death is almost bound to be the eighteenth hole. To a man who has followed Him close enough to feel His presence, death is only the path to other and finer courses ahead.

There are men who will not respond to this high venture offered them by God through Christ. Well, whatever else may be true of them, as Jesus intimated, they are not good sports. They do not show good sportsmanship toward God.

### II

But all this is but half of the matter and that, the lesser half. There is a second quality we have in mind when we call a man a good sport and that is his "gameness." He must have not only the courage for some new great venture, but he must have the steadfastness to stick to it through hardship, peril and loss. He must be "game." It is a quality we greatly admire in men.

Now this book is committed to the proposition that all good sportsmanship in life comes from God. And we cannot well appreciate God's call to "gameness" in us till we have understood His

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own. If God has imposed hazards on our course, He has not spared Himself either. There is no one who can thoughtfully regard the facts of Creation or read the Story of Redemption but must be impressed with the "gameness" of God. It was especially when He made man and bestowed on him the endowment of free will that the Divine Golfer took on a terrible hazard. For in so doing He was letting loose into His universe forces that might get beyond control, forces that might yet give Him an eternal heartbreak and send Him to the cross.

Think of that, first of all, in the realm of Creation. George Eliot makes Stradivarius, maker of violins, say:

"When any Master holds twixt hand and chin  
A violin of mine, he will be glad  
That Stradivari lived, made violins  
And made them of the best. . . .  
. . . For while God gives them skill,  
I give them instruments to play upon,  
God using me to help Him. . . .  
. . . If my hand slacked,  
I should rob God, since He is fullest good,



## **Good Sportsmanship Toward God 123**

**Leaving a blank behind, instead of violins.  
He could not make Antonio Stradivari's violins  
Without Antonio."**

And it was a terrible risk not only to the world's future music, but to the world's future art, literature, everything that was to be in the world at all when God accepted the self-imposed limitation not to make the world's music, literature or what not except as He could inspire men with understandings and wills of their own to make it. We do not know, indeed, what masterpieces in every line we have thus missed in Creation, but we do know something of the positive mischief that has been done to Creation. There is not a harmless and beautiful bird that has been exterminated by the hand of man; there is not a splendid tree or forest that has been ruthlessly cut or burned down; there is not a landscape that has been marred; there is not a false note in art; a cheap picture or song; there is not an ugly hint of poverty to indict the shameful mansions of the rich; there isn't a piece of political stupidity or chicanery that cartoons our national folly and our international madness but is dramatic with the hazards the Divine Golfer

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accepted and the losses and misses He dared when, having made the raw material of the world, He determined to handicap Himself by working out its future creation and fortunes through a free-willed man.

And through the story of Redemption runs the same voluntary sorrow of the Divine Golfer. It began in Paradise when Adam fell and brought sin into the world and all its woe. It passed through that central and tragic hour when God Himself, in human form, hung nailed to the cross which men had made for Him. And it has continued through all His re-crucifixions up to and past that late and horrible moment when some ruler, by the scratch of his pen, could hurl the whole world into a holocaust of war and slaughter of the innocents unparalleled even on the blood-stained pages of human history.

Now, who through all this, to use Studdert Kennedy's phrase, has borne "the hardest part"? Why, God. What Jesus came to reveal was a self-handicapped and suffering but still "game" God.

It would have been easy for the Divine Golfer at any time just to emasculate man of his free

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will and so eliminate the dreadful hazard of it. He might at any time, so to speak, have picked up the ball we call our earth and placed it on the other side of the hazard or have carried it to the final hole and dropped it in the cup. But through all the piercing pain and loss God, in His Creation and Providence and Redemption, has been loyal to the hazard. He has not yielded to the alternative of making of man a puppet and so taking things into His own exclusive hands. The one outstanding attribute of God is that, in spite of His broken heart, He has been "game." The greatest thing in this universe is the sportsmanship of God.

Now what, in the face of all that, does it merit and challenge in us? Forsooth, it would seem that it ought to be met with a certain "gameness" on our part, too. For the game to which God challenges us is a game for our own character. That is the reason why, on the one hand, even at the cost of so much sorrow, God has refused to eliminate the hazards of our human wills. There could be no real possibility of character for us without that. But that is the reason why, on the other hand, at the terrible cost of the cross, God has provided for us a

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Redeemer. Our one chance of a high character and an adequate destiny is a free will plus a Redeemer.

But all this cannot and ought not to be given us without a certain willingness to be game on our part. And for us to accept God's venture for us in Christ means something of self-denial and loss on our part, too. Jesus made that plain. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." There are men who will not do it. But one thing it would seem can be justly said of them. They are not good sports. And they are not worthy of the sportsmanship of God.

But the man who has dared and learned to lose to Christ, whether it be pride or covetousness or cowardice or lust, will find himself qualified to win the game of life.

"Who loseth to God as man to man  
Shall win at the turn of the game.  
I have drawn my blade where the lightnings  
meet  
But the ending is the same:  
Who loseth to God as the sword blades lose  
Shall win at the end of the game.

## **Good Sportsmanship Toward God 127**

**For God, our God, is a gallant foe that playeth  
behind the veil;**

**Whom God deigns not to overthrow hath need  
of triple mail."**

**Chapter IX: THE FIRST HOLE AND  
THE LAST**

"And when I come to die," he said,  
"Ye shall not lay me out in state,  
Nor leave your laurels at my head,  
Nor cause your men of speech orate;  
No monument your gift shall be,  
No column in the Hall of Fame;  
But just this line ye grave for me—  
    'He played the game.'"

ROBERT W. SERVICE.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time  
    Greet the unseen with a cheer!  
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,  
"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed,—fight on, fare ever  
    There as here!"

ROBERT BROWNING.

He is not dead, this friend—not dead  
But in the path we mortals tread,  
Got some few, trifling steps ahead,  
And nearer to the end,  
So that you, too, once past the bend  
Shall meet again as face to face, this friend  
You fancy dead.

Push gayly on, strong heart! The while  
You travel forward mile by mile,  
He loiters with a backward smile  
Till you can overtake,  
And strains his eyes to search his wake,  
Or, whistling, as he sees you through the brake,  
Waits on a stile.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

## Chapter IX: THE FIRST HOLE AND THE LAST

### I

I suppose that nearly every one remembers the first time he ever played golf. Most of the other games he plays are forgotten. But this one stands out. Mine was on the Country Club at Oak Park, which, even more than Evanston, is the finest suburb of Chicago.

My tutelary deity was not one of the officers of my Church there. I shall always hold it against the otherwise worthy elders and trustees of that otherwise splendid church and congregation that, during the three years I was their pastor, no one of them that played golf seems ever to have thought of inviting me to come and learn the game. A suburban church is of necessity a sort of a lonely one for a minister. Practically all the adult males of the church are away in the city during working hours. And the minister is left alone all day to



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defend the women and the children against the world, the flesh and the devil as best he can. So there is for him, if he craves male society, a certain loneliness that other ministers do not know. The officers of my boards never seemed to take that in. As for them, I should never have been initiated into the joys and insights of golf and this book would never have been written. I do not mean to be taken too seriously. They were good to me in every other way. No men more loyal to their minister could be found in any congregation on God's green earth. Initiating me into golf was the only trick they missed.

But fortunately, not all the goodness a minister receives from his flock comes from the elders and deacons. And I owe the joy and good I have received from golf to one fine gentleman of my congregation who has played his last game on earth and whom I shall not meet again till I meet him on the links of Heaven. He had not long been a member of the church. He had always been a fine gentleman. But he had not been greatly conscious of his need of Christ till a terrible tragedy came into his life. He had two boys. And one of them, Bob, the idol of all

## The First Hole and the Last 133

the boys and girls in the church, himself an earnest young Christian worker, was snatched away by death. Henceforth, the father was a broken-hearted man. And it was through his broken heart that he came to find Christ and the glad hope of the world beyond.

It was always an inspiration to me to see him in his pew. He seemed so quiet and yet so earnest a worshiper. But I did not feel I knew him very well. And I was quite unprepared for the invitation he gave me one day to accompany him and his wife to the Country Club and let him initiate me into the game of golf. And, to tell the truth, I was somewhat reluctant to go. I had no clubs, I had no clothes, I did not know the first thing about the game. I could not have told a driver from a putter, could scarcely have distinguished between the uses of a sand trap and a cup. But one of the truest kindnesses one can do to others is to compel them to come "in" to something worth while in spite of their reluctance, and there was no objection I could raise for which he had not provided. So I went.

I have never known a man more thoughtful and considerate than he was that day. He knew how humbling an experience it would be. But

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he had provided for that, too. He knew how a man hates to be humiliated before a lovely lady. So he had arranged for his wife to play a two-some with another lady, while he played around the course with me. And, for all the grotesque and terrible failures of that day, he had an exhaustless fund of encouragements, so that I was not even conscious of how dreadful it was and only when looking back on it out of a wider observation and understanding can I come nearer evaluating it. It must have been a most trying experience for him. It must have required a tremendous amount of grace, so much that even the golfers on my Board had not felt equal to it.

I am writing all this for the benefit of others. Perhaps some golfer may read this who has a minister or a friend that much needs for his relaxation and all the good it will do him to be inducted into the game of golf. Here is a chance for that golfer to be a real Christian.

My friend was not, however, to go entirely unrewarded for his pains that day. On one of the holes of the second nine, I think the fifteenth or the sixteenth, there is a big water hazard. There is a large pond some distance

## The First Hole and the Last 135

from the tee. It takes a fairly good drive to get over it. So another tee, a ladies' tee, had been built close to the edge of the pond. And my golf benefactor said to me: "The mental hazard here is great and the wind is right against us. What do you say to driving from the ladies' tee?" I replied, "I am willing to take off my shoes and go into that pond after my ball but, though I am no golfer, I have constitutional objections to driving from a ladies' tee," very stout words for which the Lord was to visit me on a later day. But not on that one. My friend said: "All right, then, drive." I answered, "No; you drive first and show me how it is done." So, with a courtesy which I did not even recognize as such at the time, he drove his ball straight into the pond. Then he went and stood by the edge of it and said: "I will stand here and watch your ball if it goes in too." How it happened I do not know but for the only time that day I hit the ball clean and it sailed into the teeth of the wind straight over the pond and lit a rod or two on the other side. It was through that one stroke he accomplished at last all he had set out to do. That stroke gave me a permanent taste for golf.

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Not that I often duplicate it. I said above that for my stout words, declining to drive from the ladies' tee, the Lord was to visit me with a humbling experience on a later day. I was playing with two other men one day. Just ahead of us, when we came to this tee, was the wife of an elder. She was one of the most prominent women in the church, a lady of culture and delightful humor and rare good sense and discernment and I was always, during my ministry in that church, particularly anxious to merit her approval. It was with a mingled sense of consternation and fear and hope and vanity in my bosom that, when we came to this tee, I heard her say: "You gentlemen just go on and drive. I will sit here and rest a bit." So my two friends drove straight over the pond. And now it was my turn. I took my stance remembering my first experience on that tee, anxious as any knight in the lists for the admiration of the fair lady whom, indeed, I did not see, but of whose presence and observation I could not but be acutely conscious. The first ball went splash into the pond. Then a second followed it. Then, in desperation, a third, a fourth and a fifth. The sixth ball I took in my hand and,

## The First Hole and the Last 137

without looking back at my lady in the grandstand, I placed it, in utter disgust and chagrin, on the other side of the pond and drove on. For about six successive Sundays I avoided looking down into her pew from the pulpit or shaking hands with her at the church door. I seemed to feel that every time I arose to preach there could not help but rise before her mind's eye that performance on the water hazard tee. Then I began to greet her once more as usual. I hoped that perhaps she had not been looking after all, or that, since she never spoke of it, it was so insignificant that she had forgotten all about it. Vain hope. A few years later, after I had left the church, I met her again one evening at a dinner. I asked her, whether by any chance, she remembered my driving off the tee at the water hazard one day. She turned eyes sparkling with laughter on me and assured me that she surely did not only remember it but always would do so. Yet she had never spoken of it once. Subtle and deep and kind, but full of inner laughter at our male follies and foibles, is the mind of a true and keen woman. She, too, had learned well something of the charity and religion of golf.

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### II.

Well, I have written of the first hole. I must add something of the last.

In the same church of Oak Park I once preached a funeral sermon over a professional golfer. He was the professional at the Country Club. And that alas! tells its own story as to religious worship in the summer time. But, in the winter, he attended my church. He was a modest and unassuming man, well liked. And a goodly crowd had gathered in the church that afternoon to pay him the last honors. Members of the Country Club were there and other professional golfers from Chicago and elsewhere, — Chick Evans and others. I have forgotten the sermon and even the text from which I preached. But there was one thing I will remember as long as I live. It was a great floral piece, the largest I have ever seen at a memorial occasion. It was, of course, all made of flowers. It bore no explicit title but it was sufficiently evident that it was meant to picture the last hole. It represented a section of the golf course, the last bit of it, the eighteenth green. On the green lay two golf sticks crossed, with the heads

## The First Hole and the Last 139

of each broken off and lying hard by. The ball was just dropping into the cup. It was the last hole. And underneath it there might have been written the words of the Apostle: "I have finished my course."

I do not know how well or ill the dead golfer had played the last hole, literally, on the golf course. And I was uncertain how he had played the last hole, metaphorically, on the links of life. For I scarcely knew him and had not known he was sick till he was gone. But I have thought of that floral piece often. Also it has always given me a peculiar thrill when I see a man play the last hole in life well.

I have seen that done over and over again. When a man stands at the last hole of the links of life he ideally faces thus. There is first of all a sort of retrospect and farewell to the past. I am reverting once more in thought to my friend who had first shown me the game. Presently, during the last year of my pastorate I began to miss him in his accustomed pew at church. I wondered at it much and, since I knew that he had not given up business, I feared that he might be losing his interest. I did not know then that he had contracted a fatal malady



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which, while it did not altogether exclude him from business, made it impossible for him to attend church with any regularity. With his usual reticence he was reluctant to burden me and others with his troubles. But he did not want that I should misunderstand him after he was gone. He did not want me to think he had lost interest either in the church or in me. So he left his message revealing the truth, to be conveyed to me by his wife after he was dead. There was but one way for him to bid farewell to the past. He played his last hole like the courteous Christian gentleman he was.

That was a brave spirit who, feeling his earthly tabernacle dissolving about him, wrote:

My bark is torn,  
Lashed it hath been by many a bitter gale;  
Its sails are stripped to tatters. And its ropes  
Lie coiled and rotting on the splintered decks.  
The precious cargo, wherewith youth and hope  
Loaded erstwhile the hold,  
Hath dwindled low beneath the gnawing  
fingers of the years.

And yet, oh yet, a goodly voyage this!  
The winds that stirred the blood to strife,

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Lightning that drew the heart to meet it  
Like the sting of magnet steel,  
The scream of gulls at dawn,  
The slender whistling masts abend,—  
How sweet these were!  
And oh! the sunlit days, the starry nights!  
And oh! love at the helm and friendship keep-  
ing watch and ward!

Wherefore, captains all in yonder fleet, good  
cheer;

'Tis worth the stress, the strain, the grinding  
nerve;

It hath a glory all its own, this sail across life's  
tumbling sea.

Wherefore, I, feeling my good ship founder  
under me,

Flag flying still, love always at the helm,  
Cry joyous greeting back to you, good cheer!

To have that attitude to the past is thus far,  
at any rate, to play the last hole well.

And yet that is but half. For, if to play the  
last hole well, a man must have one side to the  
past, he must also have a side to the future. If  
one side is toward the course he is leaving, the  
other side must be to the Divine Golfer, into

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Whose immediate presence he is to be ushered at last. It was so Paul faced death. He could say not only: "I have finished my course," but he could add: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," (if Paul had been writing to-day he might have said a silver cup) "which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day."

For just beyond the last hole the Divine Golfer awaits us, Who has made and redeemed us, and, all unseen, brought us out of many a rough and along many a fairway, till, at last, He has brought us to Himself.

There will be no moment on all these earthly courses that will stand comparison with the supreme thrill if, at last, the Divine Golfer shall clasp our hand and assure us that, though we have not shown perfect form, yet, by the grace of Christ, we have been sportsmanlike both toward Him and toward our fellow golfers on the links of life; that we have honestly and loyally played His game on earth and are qualified for the matches that lie ahead.

As for the courteous Christian gentleman who first initiated me into the game of golf, the Divine Golfer, Who is the master of all

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thoughtfulness, had provided an exceeding great courtesy for him after he had played his last hole on this earthly course. My friend found Bob waiting for him that they might play the next course together.

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Vander Meulen, John Marinus, 1870-  
Getting out of the rough.



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