

ONE SHILLING NETT

SONGS
OF
THE
LINKS

BY

R. K. RISK

EDINBURGH

GEORGE A. MORTON, 42 GEORGE STREET
LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & CO. LTD.

1904

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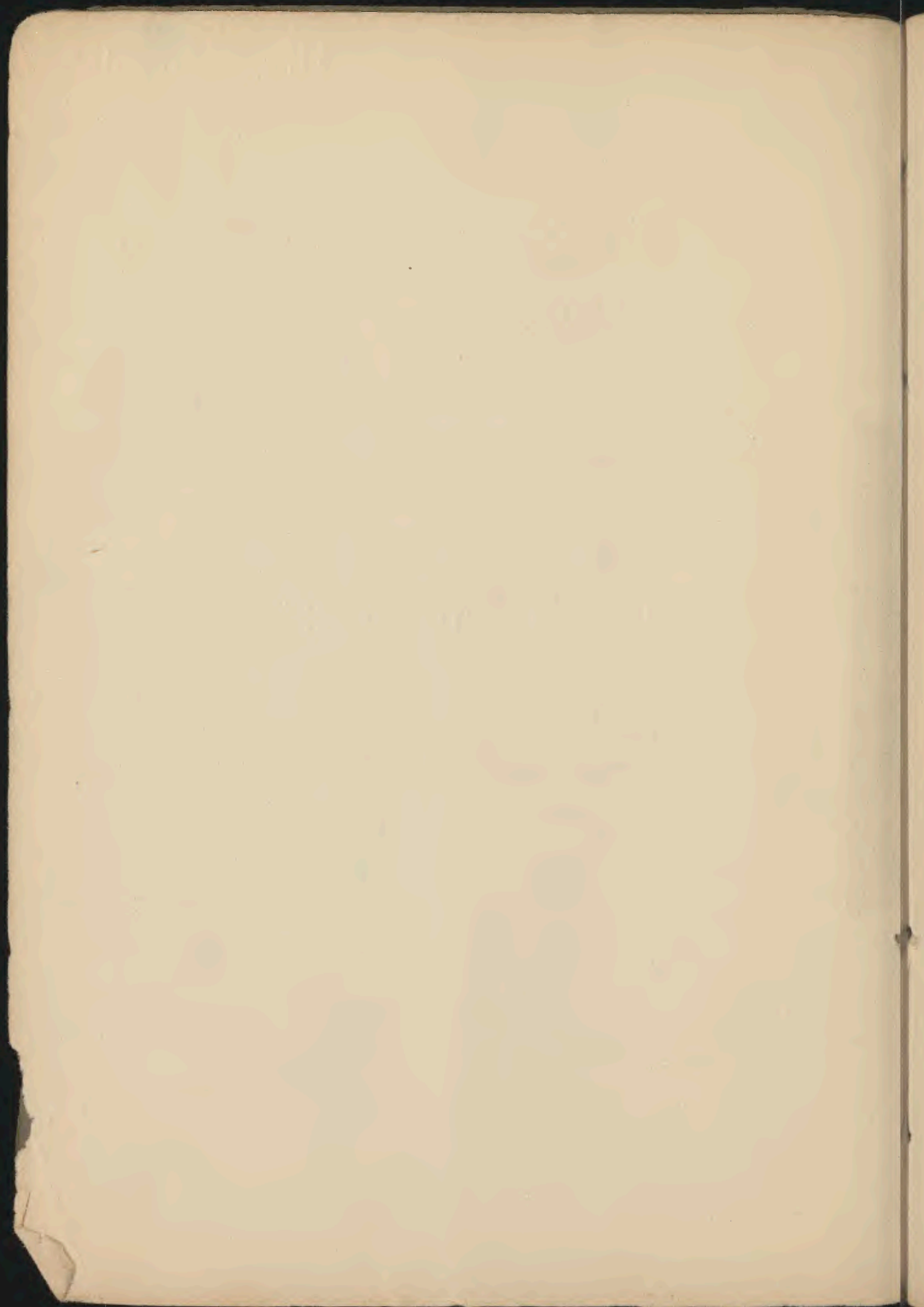
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By these, how would they
sound set to "New Music"?

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Edw.



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THESE verses have already appeared in *Golf Illustrated*, with the exception of "The Golf Widows" and "The Lost Golfer," reprinted from *Punch*; "A Ballade of Disappointment" and "Of Golf and Death," from the *Pall Mall Gazette*; and "Contentment," from the *St James's Gazette*. The thanks of the author are due to the editors of these journals for courteous permission to republish; and to a number of poets, from Omar Khayyam to Mr Rudyard Kipling, for many helpful suggestions.

THE
JOURNAL
OF
JAMES
MILNE
1841-1842
VOLUME I
PART I
CHAPTER I
THE
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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE GOLFAIYAT OF DUFAR HY-AM	I
THE TURN OF THE YEAR	4
SPRING SONG	6
THE GOLFER'S DISCONTENT	8
THE CHOICE	10
A BALLADE OF DISAPPOINTMENT	12
A SONG OF ENCOURAGEMENT	14
CONTENTMENT	16
STYLE AND THE MAN	18
THE GOLF WIDOWS	20
GOLFER AN' STATESMAN, TOO	22
LINES FOR CHRISTMAS	24
OF GOLF AND DEATH	26
THE LOST GOLFER	27
TO DAISIES	29
PATENTS	31
THREE ROUNDS A DAY	33
A DIRGE FOR SUMMER	35
A PEAN FOR WINTER	37
THE TOPPER	39
A CHRISTMAS VISION	41
WHAT IT MEANS	43
MY FAVOURITE COURSE	45
TO GOLFINA	46



SONGS OF THE LINKS

THE GOLFAIYAT OF DUFAR HY-YAM

AWAKE! for Morning o'er the links of Night
Has driven the Ball that puts the Dark to flight,
And lo! the Sun has gloriously clad
The Royal and Ancient in a Robe of Light.

Dreaming that I had done an 83,
I heard a Voice exclaim impatiently,
"Wake up! 'tis nearly half-past Nine O'clock,
There is a Crowd already on the Tee;

And while in drowsy Indolence you snore,
Stentor, the Starter, has been shouting 'Fore!'
And many a Ball has found the Swilcan-bed,
And many a Man has played the sad Two-More."

.
So now along the Strip of Herbage strown
With Bunkers, 'twixt the seashore and the sown,
We pass, and pity Sultans in their State
To whom the name of Golf is unbeknown.

SONGS OF THE LINKS

Here, with an open course from Tee to Tee,
A Partner not too dexterous—like Thee—

Beside me swiping through Elysian Fields,
And Life is wholly good enough for Me.

“How sweet a well-hit Second Shot!”—think some;
Others—“How true the Putting-Green to come!”

Ah! play the Present Stroke, nor heed the Next;
You may adopt that as an Axiom.

The 38 men set their hearts upon
Turns 50—or they prosper; and anon

That 79 which seemed a Certainty,
After a Homeward Hole or two—is gone.

Think, in this northern City, old and gray,
Where men talk Golf all night and play All Day,

How many million Players with their Clubs
Abode a little while, and went their way.

And we who now are topping in the Room
They left, are swiftly passing to the Tomb—

Yea, even unto the Grave of Walkinshaw,
For that is our inevitable Doom.

And all the Cracks of yore who once discussed
Of Baffy-Spoons so learnedly, are thrust

Like slim Pot-Hunters forth; their words to scorn
Are scattered, and their iron clubs are Rust.

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Club-makers' Shops, and heard great Argument

Of Grip and Stance and Swing; but evermore
Learned and Bought little I did not repent.

So leave the Cranks to wrangle ; and with Me
The Arguments of Theorists let be,
And softly by the Nineteenth Hole reclined
Make Game of that which maketh Game of Thee.

For out and in, whichever way we go,
Golf is a pleasant kind of Raree-Show
Full of all sorts of unexpected Fun ;
(I would not dare to tell Tom Morris so).

The Ball no question makes of Ayes or Noes,
But right or wrong, as strikes the Player, goes ;
The supercilious Kadi with your clubs
Could tell exactly Why—He knows, He knows !

Ah, Smith, could thou and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this Game in detail and entire,
And play it perfectly—would we pursue
Our round with greater Relish and Desire ?

Dufar Hy-yam ! yet keenness knows no wane ;
Behold, the Moon has risen once again ;
How oft, hereafter rising, shall she look
Along these self-same Links for Me—in vain !

When Fate has wound me on her direful Reel,
Should Memory ever to your heart reveal
A thought of Me when you are passing here—
Press down a DIVOT with a pious Heel.

THE TURN OF THE YEAR

Diffugere nives ; redeunt jam gramina campis ;
 Mutat terra vices, et decrescentia ripas
 Flumina praetereunt.—HORACE, *Odes*, iv. 7.

THE snows have fled ; now to the fields return
 New grasses, and the swollen rivers fall ;
 No longer, if you drive into the burn,
 Will it abduct your ball.

No longer nymphs and graces misarrayed
 In massive boots and ample mackintosh,
 Follow each sloppy shot that they have played
 With feet that sag and splosh.

No longer must we hurry off at noon
 From town on Saturday for one brief round^d;
 No longer now does four o'clock at Troon
 Despatch us, homeward bound.

No longer now, our fingers blue and stiff,
 We face the blizzard with an anxious smile ;
 No longer are we somewhat doubtful if
 Midwinter golf's worth while.

No longer volleying rain and bitter blast
 Smite us upon the tee and spoil our swing ;
 Indubitably we have turned at last
 The corner into Spring.

The snows have fled, but casual pools remain,
Though they in turn will vanish by-and-by ;
Meanwhile they often help us to obtain
A somewhat better lie.

No longer do the exiled tallies see
Ten-inch putts missed—those saddest might-have-beens—
For with the circling seasons once more we
Are off the winter greens.

And looking forward just a little bit,
We see the 2.15 filled chock-a-block—
(I always dodge the crowd that goes with it,
And leave at twelve o'clock).

Even if February fills the dyke
In—see the calendar—its wonted way,
It brings to scratch man and to crock alike
Two rounds on Saturday.

Pulvis et umbra sumus ; well, not yet,
Though 'tis the end of all the songs men sing ;
Upon the road to Summer we are set—
Ave atque salve, Spring !

SPRING SONG

THERE'S a whisper down the links, where the daisy peers and
blinks,

And the grass glints green in the sun,
Singing, "Out and get about now, this is Spring without a
doubt now,

And the weary winter's done";

You have faced the blast of the biting wind,

And the lash of the numbing rain,

You have heard the song—how long! how long!

Drive off on the trail again.

Ha' done with the play and the dance, dear lass,

We've seen that season through,

And it's time to turn on the old trail, our own trail, the good
trail,

Drive off, drive off on the Long Trail—the trail that is always
new!

It's north you may hie, till Dornoch charms your eye,

Or south to Westward Ho!

Or eastward to the gay, golden, grey St Andrews Bay,

Or west to Prestwick go,

Where the longest putts get home, dear lass,

And our pitches all run true,

And the ball flies far on the old trail, our own trail, the
good trail,

Flies far and sure on the Long Trail, the trail that is always
new.

The days were dank and dun, and we never saw the sun,
And the twice-breathed air blew damp;
But the greens are all new-rolled, and the year has turned to
gold,

Now we've struck our winter camp;
And we're off to the shores we love, dear lass,
By the waters bright and blue,
And our feet fall light on the old trail, our own trail, the good
trail,
Three rounds a day on the Long Trail, the trail that is always
new.

There be triple ways to take, of the eagle or the snake,
Or the way of a youth with a lass,
But the sweetest way to me is the Kempshall's from the tee,
Or over the velvet grass;
Can't you hear the click of your putt, dear lass,
That tells you have struck it true?
We're off again on the old trail, our own trail, the good trail,
Our feet are set in the Long Trail, the trail that is always new.

The Lord knows how we may play, dear lass,
Deuce cares what score we may do;
But we're back again on the old trail, our own trail, the good
trail,
We're out, far out on the Long Trail, the trail that is always
new.

THE GOLFER'S DISCONTENT

THE evils of the Golfer's state
Are shadows, not substantial things—
That envious bunkers lie in wait
For all our cleanest, longest swings ;
The pitch that should have won the round
Is caught and killed in heavy ground.

And even if at last we do
That 80, coveted so long,
A melancholy strain breaks through
The cadence of our even-song—
A 7 (which was "an easy 4")
Has "spoilt our 77 score."

And thus, with self-deception bland,
We mourn the fours that should have been,
Forgetting, on the other hand,
The luck that helped us through the green ;
Calmly accepting as our due
The four-hole which we fluked in two.

The drive that barely cleared the sand,
The brassy-shot which skimmed the wall,
The useful "kick," the lucky "land"—
We never mention these at all ;
The only luck that we admit
Is when misfortune comes of it.

SONGS OF THE LINKS

9

And therefore, in a future state,
When we shall all get down in two,
When drives are all hole-high and straight,
And every yarn we tell is true,
Golf will be wearisome and flat,
When there is naught to grumble at.

THE CHOICE

HAND me that bag in the corner, give me my brassy stout,
For things are running crosswise, and Betty and I are out.

For Betty will brook no rival, and Golf was the love of my
youth ;
That Betty is madly jealous is the sad and sordid truth.

And my weekly round of the links is the rift within our lute,
And I know she is exacting, and she thinks I am a brute.

Betty is pretty to look on, Betty's a dear and a pet—
But I know I can go round better than ever I've gone round
yet.

Betty's a maid of a thousand, and deeply in love am I—
But I'll drive the Dyke from the tee, or ever I come to die.

And Betty has written a letter, to say that our match is off,
Unless I can give to her wholly the love which belongs to
Golf.

Now I have been servant to Love for barely a twelvemonth
clear,
But Golf has been my mistress a matter of fifteen year.

There is joy in a stolen putt, in the ball picked clean away
From a heavy lie—but the game is dead ere dusk of day ;—

Yet the thought of that leary putt is a treasure I always keep,
And the clean-hit second remains to sweeten the hours of sleep.

Give me that club on the sofa, let me consider a while ;—
Here is my Favourite Mashie ; there is a Wifely Smile.

Betty my wife at fifty, dour and old and grey—
And a thousand new links opened between the Thames and
the Spey.

Here is my dearest Driver, let me consider anew,
Old Friend—and who is Betty, that I should abandon you ?

.

The sweetest maiden Betty may turn to a shrew or a minx ;
And heavy the bonds of Wedlock, but light is the chain of
the Links.

A BALLADE OF DISAPPOINTMENT

THE burden of the slogger : swipe away !
Here shalt thou turn a five into a four,
And then unto thy brassy shalt thou say,
" I'm in to-day for an uncommon score,
A round that never has been touched before "—
Yea, thou to rival Blackwell shalt aspire ;
When, lo ! thou'rt bunkered, and must play three more—
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sclafted pitches : when the clay
Clings to thy club in winter shower's downpour ;
When run-ups check and falter on their way,
And " poached eggs " fall not dead as heretofore ;
When all the dodges that came off of yore
Are futile as a scent-spray at a fire ;
When greens seem smaller than a cupboard door—
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of weak putting : Ah, that day
When every green brings something to deplore,
When strength and line are hopelessly astray ;
Those short putts missed—their burden is full sore ;
When eye and hand are out, canst thou ignore
Thy caddie's deep disgust, thy partner's ire ?
Yet wilt thou start to-morrow, as before—
This is the end of every man's desire.

So on the uplands or beside the shore
We play through sun, rain, bunkers, whin, and mire,
Till the grim Marker takes our final score—
This is the end of every man's desire.

A SONG OF ENCOURAGEMENT

OLD Allan and Young Tommy, they were duffers in their
time,

So were Braid and Taylor, Vardon, too ;
Yes, the man who plays from scratch, and the man who's
Hilton's match,
He was once a crock like you.

Then do not be discouraged, Heaven is your helper,
It ain't no use to fret,
And you needn't press or curse, for you'll only play
the worse—
You may be a Golfer yet.

The toffs who played with Allan, they had stocks beneath
their chins,
Six inch high, and more,
And to go round in a tile was esteemed the proper style—
But they did not keep their score.

The heroes of the 'fifties they had ugly long-nosed clubs,
Also they approached with baffy-spoons ;
On the ball they kept their eye—same as you will by-and-
by—
They were quaint and pawky loons.

The heroes of the 'fifties they had ever cash in hand,
Which they staked upon the play ;
They'd no Monthly Medals then, and no 27-men,
Such as Jones and you to-day.

The Old Gang at St Andrews never heard of wry-necked
clubs,

Or brassies with an aluminium head,
No patent tools had they, but somehow found the way
To lay their third shots dead.

The Old Gang at St Andrews never heard of Bogey scores,
No one argued then about the Par;
They'd no Badminton to read—those were doleful days
indeed—
But they drove both sure and far.

The Old Gang at St Andrews sometimes pulled and sliced
and topped,
And to-day you do that same,
And that's the reason why there's a chance that by-and-by
You may play a decent game.

So do not be discouraged, Heaven is your helper,
It ain't no use to fret,
And you needn't press and curse, for you'll only play
the worse—
You may be a Golfer yet.

CONTENTMENT

I CANNOT drive a decent ball,
I either pull, or slice, or scloff,
And yet I do not heed at all
The rude spectator's jeering laugh:
My second never is clean-hit—
I do not care one little bit.

A cleek is of no use to me,
I play two iron-shots instead,
And all my club-mates will agree
I never lay a long one dead;
And though I've hired a first-class coach,
I'm always short with my approach.

And when at length I reach the green,
I never blame my luck, or frown,
Or show the slightest sign of spleen,
Because my putts will not go down.
Others may swear at missing, but
I don't: I know I cannot putt.

Bunkers and I are well acquaint,
I look in ev'ry time I pass;
My ball is destitute of paint
Or ever I regain the grass;
The circumjacent caddies grin
To see me hack my way through whin.

SONGS OF THE LINKS

17

And yet, on competition-days,
With honest pride my features shine,
When I, despite my devious ways,
Have made the Monthly Medal mine ;
And if you ask me how I can—
I AM A 27-MAN.

STYLE AND THE MAN

IN the Neolithic Age, Golf was then, as now, the rage,
Four thousand years before the Feather Ball ;
I was plus 5 in my clan, in the dim red Dawn of Man,
With a swing and follow-through admired by all.

Yes, I played as now I play, in those ages far away,
And I lifted all the medals at Dordogne ;
And the record that I made with a patent cleek of jade,
Since 1606 B.C. has stood alone.

But a rival of Solutre told the tribe my style was outré—
'Neath my niblick carved of dolomite he fell,
And my swing and grip and stance, standardised in southern
France,
Were Kodaked by an etcher of Grenelle.

Then I stripped my critic bare, gave my caddie, for his wear,
The skins that to the scoffer did belong,
And I mopped my brow and said, "It is well that he is dead,
For I know my style is right and his was wrong."

But my totem saw it done ; on the sinking of the sun,
He told me in a vision of the night,
"There are ways fourscore and three of driving from the tee,
And every single one of them is right."

.

My second incarnation brings me little jubilation
 (Full thirty years ago it came to pass),
For I, the critic-slayer, find myself again a player,
 But handicapped at 10, and Second Class.

And I meet the men I know as my club-mates long ago,
 When the mastodons were hazards through the green;
As in prehistoric France, they still criticise my stance,
 In ignorance and confidence serene.

Still a scientific age sees us argufy and rage,
 There's a new Golf Tutor published once a day;
We can always find the time with a certitude sublime
 To show a fellow-duffer how to play.

Day by day the game expands, day and night the golfer
 stands
 A-wagglng on the Universal Tee,
And a style condemned at Kew may be praised at Khat-
 mandu—
 If there is a Khatmanduvian G.C.

Here's the lesson, frank and free, that my totem taught to me,
 When I slew my critic, rash and impolite—
"There are ways fourscore and three of driving from the tee,
 And—every—single—one—of—them—is—right."

THE GOLF WIDOWS

Do you hear the widows weeping, O my brothers,
Wedded but a few brief years?
They are writing home complaining to their mothers,
And their ink's suffused with tears.
The young lads are playing in the meadows,
The young babes are sleeping in the nest;
The young men are flirting in the shadows,
The young maids are helping them, with zest.
But the young golf widows, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly,
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
While you're swiping from the tee.

Do you ask your grazing widows in their sorrow
Why their tears are falling so?
"Oh—yesterday—to-day again—to-morrow—
To the links you ALWAYS go!
Your golf 'shop,'" they say, "is very dreary,
You speak of nothing else from week to week;
A really patient wife will grow a-weary
Of talk about a concentrated cleek."
Yes, the young golf widows, O my brothers,
Do you ask them why they weep?
They are longing to be back beside their mothers,
While you're playing in a sweep.

And well may the widows weep before you
When your nightly round is done ;
They care nothing for a stymie, or the glory
Gained by holing out in one.
“ How long,” they say, “ how long in careless fashion,
Will you stand, to drive the Dyke, upon our hearts,
Trample down with nailèd heel our early passion,
Turning homeward only when the light departs ?
You can hear our lamentations many a mile hence,
Can you hearken without shame
When our mourning curseth deeper in the silence
Than a strong man off his game ? ”

GOLFER AN' STATESMAN, TOO

(According to Tom Morris, Mr A. J. Balfour is "a very fair golfer.")

AS I was loafin' along the links, an' smokin' my pipe the while,

I seed a man who was goin' round with a most umbrageous smile,

'E was knockin' the sand off 'is niblick-'ead, and I sez to 'im,
"Oo are you?"

Sez 'e, "I'm a Golfer,—a very fair Golfer—Golfer and Statesman, too."

Now 'is work begins at Gawd knows when, an' 'is work is never through;

'E ain't no reglar sportin' toff, nor 'e ain't no professional too,
'E's a kind o' a giddy harumfrodite—Golfer an' Statesman, too.

I up an' follered 'im over the links, a-doin' all kinds o' things,
Assaultin' a ball with all sorts o' sticks in various kinds o' swings;

'E'd knock it into a gravel-pit, an' argue 'is way straight through—

For you see 'e's a Golfer—a very fair Golfer—Golfer an' Statesman, too.

There isn't a job on the whole o' the links as 'e doesn't feel fit to do;

'E'd 'ave 'ad 'is game on Mount Ararat, if 'e 'ad to go round by canoe;

No, 'e ain't no butterfly toff, 'e ain't—Golfer an' Statesman, too.

You may say 'e is fond o' philosophy, an' often shows signs
o' the 'ump,
W'en the 'Ouse sits up till breakfis'-time with procrastitutes
on the stump;
But once in a while 'e can salt them in style—wot Askwith
could never do—
'E's not only a Golfer—a very fair Golfer—Golfer an' States-
man, too.
'E thinks for hisself, an' 'e plays for hisself (Crawford tells 'im
just wot to do),
'E'd lay hisself stone dead at the hole from a bunker o' Hirish
Stew;
Ho! 'e ain't no limpin' long-handicap crock—Golfer an'
Statesman too.

LINES FOR CHRISTMAS

MAY Christmas Day be bright and fair,
A hint of frost-bite in the air,
But above all may there be no
SNOW.

Even when snow is crisp and dry
Golf is an imbecility—
No one can lay a ball that's red
DEAD.

And may no slight, well-meaning thaw
Persuade the snow to half-withdraw,
And tempt us out to wade in lush
SLUSH.

Rather I'd welcome with good-will
Xmas with golf impossible,
Or pray for, surely not in vain,
RAIN.

For casual pools, spread here and there,
Assist one very often, where
A dropped ball lies, in time of need,
TEED.

In any weather, barring snow,
At Xmas golfing we will go—
Unless we must, disconsolate,
SKATE.

SONGS OF THE LINKS

25

Surely the Weather-God, turned churl,
Won't drive us out to skate or curl—
Surely he'll think, ere sending ice,
TWICE.

A morning single, done too soon,
With foursomes in the afternoon,
Will make us turkey-fit at night,
QUITE.

The Sacred Bird's libation free
Is a dry wine of '93—
And do not deem a second weed
GREED.

And when these proper rites are paid,
Steeped in the lamplight's roseate shade,
Round off your Xmas with a ripe
PIPE.

OF GOLF AND DEATH

THIS planet is a links whereon we play
Few holes or many, as Death may decree.
We call him Colonel Bogey ; 'tis the way
Of mankind to invent a kindlier name,
A jesting phrase for the Arch-enemy.
With every match the Colonel leaves the tee,
But all alone he finishes the game.

Some start in the rash confidence of youth,
To end in an untimely bunker-grave ;
The Colonel is inclement, void of ruth,
Spares not the slashing driver in his pride ;
No deft approach, no pawky putt can stave
Him off—many, not over-brave,
Tear up their cards in futile suicide.

Sooner or later—oftener soon than late—
We pass, and the next victim forth is led,
Vaunting himself superior over Fate ;
But ere the Home Green is in sight he yields ;
With one grim stroke the Colonel lays him dead.
Yet is the Long Match ours ; 'tis soothly said
The Colonel enters not the Elysian Fields.

THE LOST GOLFER

(In Memory of a Craze)

JUST for a celluloid pillule he left us,
Just for an imbecile batlet and ball,
These were the toys by which Fortune bereft us
Of JENNINGS, our captain, the pride of us all.
Shopmen with clubs to sell handed him rackets,
Rackets of sand-paper, rubber, and felt,
Said to secure an unplayable service,
Pestilent screws and the death-dealing welt.
Oft had we played with him, partnered him, sworn by him,
Copied his pitches, in height and in cut,
Hung on his words as he dived in a bunker,
Made him our pattern to drive and to putt.
BENEDICK'S with us, the MAJOR is of us,
SWIPER the county bat's still going strong ;—
He alone broke from the links and the clubhouse,
He alone sank in the slough of Ping-Pong.

We have "come on"—but not his the example ;
Sloe-gin has quickened us—not his the cash ;
Holes done in 6 where a 4 would be ample
Vexed him not, busy perfecting a smash.
Rased was his name as a decadent angel,
One more mind unhinged by a piffulent game,
One more parlour-hero, the worshipped of school-girls,
Who once had a princely "plus 5" to his name.

JENNINGS was gone ;—but at last he came back to us,
Healed of his hideous lesion of brain,
Back to the links in the daytime ; at twilight
Back to his cosy club-corner again.
Back for the Medal Day, back for our foursomes,
Back from the tables' diminishing throng,
Back from the infantile, ceaseless half-volley,
Back from the lunatic lure of Ping-Pong.

TO DAISIES

WHEN daisies pied are fair and new,
And plentiful as snowy white,
They hide our Haskells snug from view,
And play the devil's own delight.
The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks golfing men; for thus sings he:

“Lost ball!

Cuckoo! Lost ball!”—O words of fear,
Unpleasing to the golfer's ear.

When inland links are green and fresh,
And blithe birds pipe their roundelay,
The daisies trap us in their mesh—
The links might be a field of hay.
The cuckoo then, incessantly,
Mocks golfing men; for thus sings he:

“Lost ball!

Lost ball! Lost hole!”—O words of fear,
Invidious to the golfer's ear.

Then keenest caddies' eyes are blind,
For while the daisies have their way,
The golfer knows no peace of mind—
One round takes up the blessed day.

SONGS OF THE LINKS

The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Croaks daylong in malicious glee:

“Lost hole!

Lost ball! Lost hole!”—O words of fear,
Malignant to the golfer's ear.

PATENTS

HE bought a driving-putter, a Britannia-metal cleek,
On the bulger-ballast system, and he used them for a week ;
Then he tried a putting-mashie with a grip of Russia leather,
And a corrugated iron guaranteed to stand the weather.

He'd a neat pneumatic niblick with a concentrated head ;
Gun-metal in his wooden clubs usurped the place of lead ;
His boots bore rows of ten-inch nails arranged with care and
craft,
And his copper-bottomed brassy had a *lignum vitæ* shaft.

He'd the very latest thing in cards whereon to mark his
score,
It always showed the other man had played at least two
more ;
And however much loose driving with weak putting might
combine,
This knowing card would never mark him more than ninety-
nine.

Men cursed his slowness on the green ; he paid no heed to
them,
But worked each putting curve out by binomial theorem ;
He used a pocket wind-gauge ; and whenever frost was keen,
Fore-caddies carried warming-pans wherewith to thaw the
green.

But by some strange fatality he never won a match,
And month by month his handicap moved further up from
scratch.

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On skittle-balls and dominoes he spent the tidy sum
Received for golf-kit purchased by the British Mu—se—um.

THREE ROUNDS A DAY

THE Sciaffigerm has seized us, we have got it fell and bad,
It prostrates men of middle age, the old hand, and the lad;
It's before us, and behind us, and we cannot get away,
But 'twixt breakfast-time and dinner we go three rounds
a day.

The first week that we started, we romped round gay and
free,
A single after breakfast and another after tea,
With a foursome in between them—for a rest, as you might
say—
We thought that life was Paradise on three rounds a day.

The next week found us readier for foursomes; "Better fun,"
We called them, and of singles we coveted just one;
For the prospect of an 86 is swift to fade away
In a week at Machrihanish on three rounds a day.

Then there came a doleful morning, when we topped, and
sliced, and swore,
When all our fours were sixes, and some sixes were three
more,
When the course seemed wholly bunker, and the bents like
healthy hay,
And golf-staleness brooded fog-like o'er our three rounds a
day.

There is no fun in foozling, and the habit grips like drink ;
It's simpler to acquire it than many people think.
If you want to "go off" handsome, the straightest, shortest
way
Is to keep on for a fortnight at your three rounds a day.

Then strike for home and go,
The rain is falling,
The town is calling ;
We've golfed ourselves right out, as well we know.

And those who do not like it, they must lump it ;
We are as stale as a last Friday's crumpet ;
We've got to stop somewhere—sometime—somehow—
We might as well begin to do it now.

Then, golfcide, pack up your kit-bag slow,
Gather your clubs and strap them tight—just so,
Take one last look at the last green and go.
(Heaven help us !)

A DIRGE FOR SUMMER

GONE are the days when by the swinging sea
We lounged and smoked between two sunny rounds,
Gone are the times of loitering by the tee ;
The summer has been driven out of bounds—
No penalty is writ in white and black,
Whereby we are allowed to call it back.

Gone are the jocund evenings when we start,
High-tea'd and confident of light and weather,
Forgetful of the office and the mart,
Of debts and duns and the Golf-maniac's blether ;
Those perfect evenings, clear, and dry, and bright,
Have vanished wholly in the *Ewigkeit*.

Gone is the crowd about the starter's box,
And no one waits to-day at those short holes,
Where the procrastinating putter mocks
The men behind and harrows up their souls ;
Void the grey town o' scarlet gown and cleek
(I've half a mind to go there for a week).

For now we must from Saturday to Saturday
Neglect our game—a week's a weary time—
And each one brings a *coarser* and a *watter* day
(Kindly excuse a Caledonian rhyme),
For we are entered on the Golfer's Lent,
The season of his deepest discontent.

Yet on the dim horizon looms afar,
No larger than the neatest niblick head,
A little scintillating, faithful star :
Though over all the heavens is darkness spread,
Through all the winter waste it sends a greeting,
The constellation of Next Year's Spring Meeting.

A PÆAN FOR WINTER

GONE is the time when by the sad, grey sea
I waited patiently two weary rounds,
Gone are the days he spent 'twixt green and tee,
And Golf is now restrained within due bounds;
For Summer fled I do not sigh "Alack-
A-day"; I'm very glad it can't come back.

Gone are the evenings when he used to start,
After a scrambling meal—I hate high-teaing—
"Forgetful of the office and the mart,"
And also of his spouse's very being;
His love for an insensate ball and cleek
Made me a widow six days in each week.

And now at last from Sunday until Friday
He recognises that he has a wife,
Whose sole concern is not to keep things tidy
And share the merest fraction of his life,
Providing just the things he likes for dinner,
In case his bunker-work should make him thinner.

And now, when Winter fires and lamps are lit,
I have some respite from his golfing jargon,
Which, frankly, I don't understand a bit—
It bored me nightly in the months that are gone;
Sometimes for a whole day, in winter weather,
He will forget his mania altogether.

Therefore that "scintillating constellation,"
The next Spring Meeting, never mocks my eye ;
I can forget my old exasperation—
Now his Midsummer madness has gone by.
But if next year he flouts me for a "foursome,"
I shall burn all his clubs, or else divorce him.

THE TOPPER

HE's top—top—top—top—topping to the seventh hole,
Top—top—top—top—off the tee and through the green,
Clubs—clubs—clubs—clubs—swinging up and down again—
And the course is three miles round.

Six—seven—six—eight—six—eight is his score so far,
Seven—six—eight—six—eight—six it was yesterday,
Top—top—top—top—up the hill and down again—
And the course is three miles round.

Don't—don't—don't—don't—look at him in front of you,
Top—top—top—top—topping just ahead of us;
Men—men—men—go—off their game with watching him
On the wheel where he is bound.

Try—try—try—try—just to take your eyes off him,
He'll—get—out—of—sight if we wait long enough,
Top—top—top—top—tacking right and left again—
And now we're half way round.

Wait—wait—wait—wait—till he gets a hole ahead;
If—we—don't—we'll—both of us go all to bits,
Top—top—top—top—topping in the wake of him—
Thank Heaven, we're homeward bound!

I—can—stick—out—squatters on the putting green,
Men—who—try—three—clubs before they play a shot,
But not—not—not—not—not the chronic sight of Him—
'Say, let's chuck this round.

A CHRISTMAS VISION

AT the happy hour
When the post-prandial Larranaga, burnt
Down to its stump, summons the seasoned briar
To end the goodly work so well begun,
I dozed, reflecting on the Xmas round
That should precede the Family Gathering,
That joy or penance—as the case may be—
Deemed at this season indispensable.

Sudden, I found myself
Facing the Himalayas' fearsome front,
With a plum-pudding perched upon the tee.
Methought I topped it, and the ponderous sphere
Drooped in its flight, and lay beneath the bank,
While Snooks's drive went soaring to the green.
My urgent niblick sank within the globe,
Once, twice, and thrice: then to my caddie's grief—
Who caught the vagrant raisins as they flew,
And stuffed them in his mouth and gaped for more—
I played the smaller half up to the green,
And with three careful putts got down in eight;
While Snooks, embarrassed by an Ocobo
Thrice larger than the hole's circumference,
Could not, for all his skill, get down at all.
And so I won that hole.

Teed for the next I found a projectile
Of more than dubious rotundity;

But undismayed, I swiped ; and with a shriek
It flew straight for the pin, and perched thereon,
Leaving a scent of sausage in its wake,
And sagely-onioned stuffing ; Snooks had sliced
His bird, while mine dropped dead athwart the hole.

Thence we fared
To the Elysian Fields, and found them strown
With holly-branches ; to the left, a grove
Of lofty boot-trees thick with mistletoe,
Wherein a bevy of fair damosels
Ambushed poor Snooks, who is a Ladies' Man.
And so he disappeared, while on I went—
Past players who had aluminium heads,
And wry-necked caddies, whom they used as clubs,
Paying them eighteenpence for every putt—
Unto the Swilcan Burn, whence unsurprised
I saw St Andrews' adult populace
Uplifting odoriferous rum-punch ;
While here and there, reclined upon the banks
In attitudes of unconsidered grace,
Some murmured, " Man, that's gr-r-aund ! Anither gless ! "

Beyond the Burn
I found a group before the Veteran's door,
And I beheld the Veteran himself,
With other local notabilities,
Playing hop-scotch upon the eighteenth green—
That sacred sward, the apple of his eye.
This proved too much for my credulity,
And straight I woke.

WHAT IT MEANS

THERE'S a word you always see, pronounce it as you may,
"Golf," "Goff," or "Gowff"—it really doesn't matter which
you play—

You hear it by the sounding sea, and on the mountain's crest,
And when you've found out all it means, I'll tell you half
the rest.

Golf means the rasping tee shot that should carry to the green ;
Golf means that you can pick it up, since you have played
thirteen ;

Golf means that you can time the ball, because your style is
sound ;

Golf means that you have missed the ball, or sent it under-
ground.

Golf means the dainty mashie-chip, that lays you by the hole ;
Golf means the fluky topped approach that also gains that goal ;
Golf means the pestilential luck that favoured Smith all day,
By which alone he laid you out, six down and five to play.

Golf means the raging brooklet that is swollen by the rain ;
Golf means you're lucky if you get your Haskell out
again ;

Golf means the wind you learn to cheat, if prudently you go,
For lessons how to pull and slice, to Mr. J. L. Low.

Golf means "We'll get the early train, and mind you aren't late";

Golf means ten couples on the tee, and half an hour to wait;

Golf means that some men play for halves, while others play to win;

Golf means for some men exercise, for other men sloe-gin.

Golf means the long and leary putt that glides into the "cup";

Golf also means you never will be down unless you're up;

Golf means a multitude of woes that harrow up your soul;

Golf means there's balm in Gilead when you reach the Nineteenth Hole.

Golf means the well-planned links—ten 4's, one 3, and seven 5's;

Golf means that men to play thereon desert their work and wives;

Golf means the futile drive-pitch course that has "such splendid views";

Golf means a frequent scarcity of people for the pews.

Golf means that sometimes you go round like an inspired machine;

Golf means you'd miss a ten-inch putt into a soup-tureen;

Golf means more than a title, or wealth, or birth, or fame;

Golf means "Well, he did lick me, but I wasn't on my game."

From Hoylake unto Sandwich, Westward Ho! to Cruden Bay,
Elate, depressed, short-tempered, bland, for ever and a day

Man follows man from tee to tee, and eke from green to green,
Intent on learning all the things that Golf—Goff—Gowff may mean.

MY FAVOURITE COURSE

"Colorado Springs has the highest links in the world."

SOME chant the praise of Westward Ho !
Of Gullane, Prestwick, or Portrush ;
The Golf Stream's vast, autumnal flow
Bears thousands to the crowd and crush
Of grey St Andrews. As for me,
To none of these my fancy clings—
My course lies far across the sea,
Its name is Colorado Springs.

Sea-turf, sea-air, sea-gulls, sea-sand
Have their attraction, I admit ;
But set beside the Rio Grande
The sea is simply out of it.
One single statement, namely, this,
My case against sea links will clinch—
Their atmospheric pressure is
16·4 to the square inch.

The pressure of the atmosphere
Offers resistance to the ball,
Which is the reason, plain and clear,
So many men can't drive at all.
Remove the pressure of the air,
And then your happy tee-shot wings
Its tireless flight to anywhere
You like—from Colorado Springs.

For on that high Elysium
No envious air the ball retards ;
The raw recruit to Dufferdom
Can drive a full 400 yards.
It is the Fogeys' Paradise—
I speak to them as friend to friend,
And hope they'll act on the advice
To try my course this next week-end.

SONGS OF THE LINKS

TO GOLFINA

A NEW YEAR ODE

ABOVE the clubhouse portal
Crowned with green turf she stands,
Who gathers all men mortal
In sacrificial bands ;
Her iron face is sweeter
Than Love's, who fears to meet her,
To men who daily greet her
With supplicating hands.

She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born,
Who straight forget their mother,
Their sins, their wives forlorn ;
Their food they swiftly swallow,
Take wing for her and follow
O'er hedge, and hill, and hollow,
Till eve from early morn.

Forgetting loves that wither,
Desks, Pulpits, Stocks, and Rings,
Forgetting bores who blither,
And all disastrous things ;
We may have done some task ill,
Been cheated by a rascal,
But let us tee a Haskell,
And debts and duns take wings.

Golfina may send sorrow—
Six down and five to play—
But we will win to-morrow,
Which is another day ;
 Though we have lost a fiver,
 Or broken our pet driver,
 Golfina bates no stiver
The homage we must pay.

From enervated putting,
From topping on the tee,
Perpetual tut-tutting
At things which should not be,
 Miscalculated pitches
 That land us deep in ditches,
 New golf-books that bewitch us,
Golfina, set us free !

ENVOY

SONGS OF THE LINKS are for the idle hour—
For times of waiting by the Club-room fire,
Until the passing of the summer shower,
Until the clouds have climbed a little higher.

Songs of the Links to Fame make no appeal,
Upon the Lower Slopes they rest, content
At times to borrow, or, it may be, steal
From Licensed Bards a lilt or sentiment.

Songs of the Links have no didactic aim ;
Whether you play from 20, or plus 2,
I dedicate these rhymes about our Game
To whom, Sagacious Purchaser?—to YOU.



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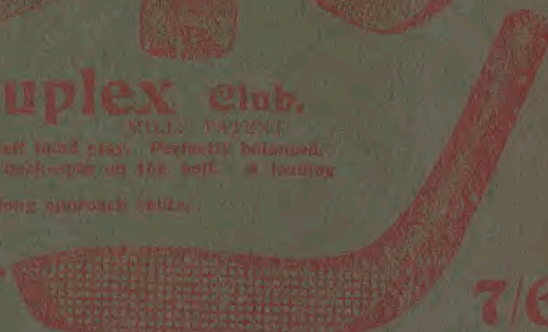
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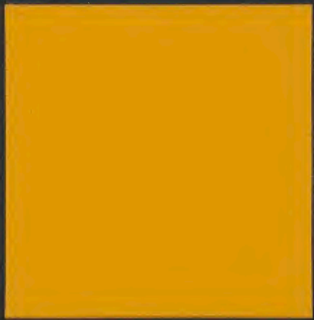
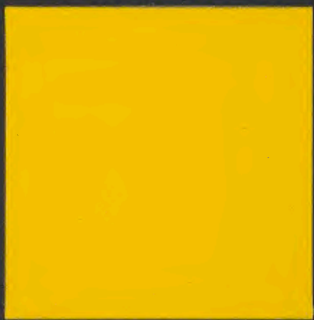
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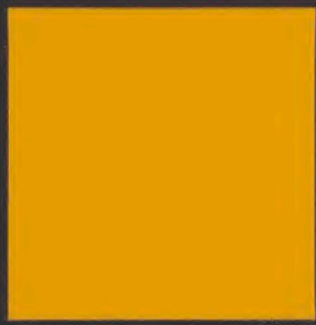
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