The Badminton Library
of
Sports and Pastimes

Edited by
His Grace The Duke of Beaufort, K.G.

Assisted by Alfred E. T. Watson

Golf
DEDICATION

TO

H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES

BADMINTON: March, 1890.
A FEW LINES only are necessary to explain the object with which these volumes are put forth. There is no modern encyclopædia to which the inexperienced man, who seeks guidance in the practice of the various British Sports and Pastimes, can turn for information. Some books there are on Hunting, some on Racing, some on Lawn Tennis, some on Fishing, and so on; but one Library, or succession of volumes, which treats of the Sports and Pastimes indulged in by Englishmen—and women—is wanting. The Badminton Library is offered to supply the want. Of the imperfections which must be found in the execution of such a design we are
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CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF GOLF

BY ANDREW LANG

THE history of golf, as of most games, has still to be written. As a rule, these topics have been studied either by people of letters who were no sportsmen, or by sportsmen who had little tincture of letters. Golf has so far been fortunate in receiving the attention of Mr. Robert Chambers. The editor of ‘Golf, an Ancient and Royal Game’ (R. and R. Clark, Edinburgh, 1875) was deeply versed in Scotch antiquities, and communicated his learning with unstudied grace. But ‘Golf’ is undoubtedly incomplete, sketchy, and scrappy, a collection of documents and odds and ends. It is nowhere, in a single chapter, that the history of golf can be exhaustively written. But we may try
instructions shall then refer to the *position in which he should stand, relatively to the ball which he intends to drive.*

Now this will in part depend upon the length of club which his fancy shall have determined to be the best adapted to his physical anatomy. Instead, therefore, of taking our measurements in feet and yards, we will measure by means of the driver itself. The ball, then, we may say, should be at just such a distance from the player that when the club is laid with its *heel*—not the *centre* of its face—to the ball, the end of the club shaft reaches just to the player's left knee as he stands upright. But even this mode of measurement is liable to many exceptions, for the proper distance of ball from foot is in a great degree determined by the 'lie' of the club—by the angle

**POSITION FOR THE DRIVE**
that the left foot is turned but slightly outwards, the right foot somewhat more so—and this not without reason; for, as the blow is struck, a forward impetus is given from the right foot, and impinges upon the left.

Having then arrived at this rough conclusion with reference to the proper distance of the right foot from the left, it remains to fix its position by taking another angle of measurement. Let us take a line, at right angles with the vertical plane in which we have placed shaft, hands, and left eye, running from the player’s left toe towards the right of him, a line parallel in fact, though we are producing it the opposite way to that in which he is intending to drive—his right toe should be some three inches in rear (farther away from the ball) of this imaginary line. Stand up, club in hand, on your drawing-room carpet, which has probably some lines in its pattern, or on the kamp-tulicon in the hall, choosing your position not without reference to the chandelier, and you will soon contrive to persuade your untutored members into the positions herein indicated; which relative positions will be more readily comprehended by a glance at the above diagram. Herein, I is the player’s left eye, at H H are his hands gripping the club c, which lies with its head behind the ball b; and the vertical plane in which these all lie is
that in the latter case the club-head rises and falls more vertically, with less of a sweep, than in the former case; in other words, that it does not travel so long in the intended line of flight of the ball. The reason of this is that in the upward stroke the arms are less able to swing freely away from the body in the latter than in the former attitude; and that in the downward stroke there is as it were a corner to be passed in the swing, the arms have to be drawn in again a little towards the body as the club-head descends. This is what some professionals mean when they tell the learner that this standing with the right foot advanced tends to ‘check the swing.’ In point of fact, it does produce a moment of check in it, preventing the swing from coming evenly through. Moreover, quite apart from such deductions from first principles, it will be seen that the very great majority of fine players stand with the right foot slightly in rear of the left, that those who adopt the alternative position are quite remarkable in their departure from the normal rule, and that the great mass of professional players instruct the learner to stand in the attitude shown in our diagram, which is also the position which is recommended in the golfing manuals of Mr. Chambers and of Mr. Forgan. With this weight of testimony in favour of the mode of stand which we have indicated, we may confidently proceed to the further details which go to compose the driving-swing, starting from this basis as the first position.

Before going into the matter of the course which the club-head ought to pursue on its upward and downward journeys, we will first consider the general nature of the intended stroke. Above everything, the golfing drive is a swing, and not a hit. These are very short and simple words, and contain a truth universally admitted—universally, almost, forgotten. If only a man can show practical full appreciation of their depth of meaning, he is not far from a finished driver. It may be almost termed a sweep: the ball is to be met by the club-head at a certain point in the swing, and swept away; it is not to be hit at. The word ‘hit’ ought to be a misnomer for the stroke—too often it is not—and the word ‘drive’ should be scarcely
parent, as they won the match, after very good play, by one hole. Subsequently he gave up golf, and worked at the mason’s trade, but died at a comparatively early age of consumption.

As will have been already seen in our account of their matches against Allan Robertson and Tom Morris, the brothers William and James Dunn were in the first rank of players, and on their native green of Musselburgh were well-nigh invincible. They were twins, club and ball makers by trade, and remained a long time at home, but subsequently removed to Blackheath. Willie Dunn in particular was distinguished for a beautiful, easy style, standing straight up to his ball, and was, as we have remarked above, an exceedingly long driver. In support of this statement, it may be said that he once played a shot from the medal tee on the Hole o’ Cross Green at St. Andrews, coming in to the fourth hole, and the ball was found in the little crescent-shaped bunker at the end of the Elysian Fields; this hazard in commemoration of the shot was christened ‘Dunny,’ a name which it retains to this day. The distance, as measured on the map, is 250 yards, and although by no means standing as a record for length (indeed the writer has frequently seen longer shots driven), yet it will probably be admitted that anyone who could make such a shot (and in this instance the circumstances of wind and condition of ground were not exceptionally favourable) must be credited with driving powers above the average. After he had been at Blackheath some years, a match was arranged between him and Willie Park, to be played at Prestwick. Dunn was tutored by Tom Morris, the great man, and his driving was astonishingly good.
years, a match was arranged between him and Willie Park, to be played at Prestwick. Dunn was tutored by Tom Morris,
young fellow in whose hands the interests of the game will be safe.¹

In fitting juxtaposition to the name of Park may be placed that of Morris—Tom Morris to wit; a name known, it may be said without contradiction, in each of the four continents of the globe. His name is so interwoven with the game that, as will have been already noted, it is impossible to go far afield without introducing him to the acquaintance of the reader, so to speak, by a side wind. That being so, the present historian merely proposes to effect a slightly more formal introduction, giving such additional details and incidents of his life as may conceivably prove of interest. These, it may be stated, have been taken down at first hand from his own lips, and in one or two particulars may be found to vary slightly from accounts which have already been published. The subject of our sketch, then, was born in North Street, St. Andrews, in 1821. His father was a letter-carrier, but at a later period abandoned this occupation for the weightier one of carrying clubs. At the age of ten or twelve Tom began to knock balls about, and, curiously enough, began to drive with his left hand below his right—a mode of play adopted by only two players in the writer's experience. It was by a mere accident that Tom became a golfer at all, for his career was marked out for him, and arrangements all but completed, under which he was to have been apprenticed to a carpenter; but a casual question of old Sandy Herd, as to why he did not get apprenticed to Allan Robertson as a club-maker, put the idea into his head. Allan considered the matter, the upshot of which was that he agreed to take Tom, who served under him four years as apprentice and five as journeyman, and from that period began his golfing life. Possessing naturally a keen, good eye, he began before long to 'play a game,' which year by year developed until, in

¹ Since the above was written Park has added the championship of 1889 to his record; a tie with Andrew Kirkaldy, in the lowest recorded score of 155 at Musselburgh, was composed of three thirty-nines and a thirty-eight. On playing off, Park won by five strokes.
measuring himself against Allan Robertson, the latter found himself obliged gradually to decrease the odds of a half to a third, thence to four strokes, until at last, if the ‘old man’ was not exactly ‘beaten by the boy,’ still the boy, or rather lad of twenty-two or thereabouts, rendered such an exceedingly good account of himself that the odds he was allowed were represented by zero. Here, then, was a fact. He could play the greatest living master of the game and hold his own; but their interests were not divided, and it was rather as partners that they took the golfing world by storm. It was during Tom’s period of service with Allan that their great match was played against the Dunns for 400l.; indeed this was Tom’s first appearance in public in a match of importance, and certainly it was a sufficiently trying ordeal for a youngster to be called upon to go through. How he acquitted himself, and the result of the match, having been already noticed, need not be here recapitulated. On the expiration of his time with Allan Robertson, he started business on his own account as club and ball maker, and continued at it for about three years; at the end of which time, about 1851, chiefly through the instrumentality of Colonel Fairlie of Coodham, for whom he had carried clubs, he was appointed custodian of Prestwick Links, just then newly established as a golf course. In this capacity he remained fourteen years. During the last four years of this period he was subjected to incessant entreaties to return to his native city: for this length of time he held out, preferring the old twelve-hole course at Prestwick to St. Andrews; but in the end his defences were broken down, and he returned to the old grey city, which he has never since quitted.

Tom, ‘old Tom,’ is a character, an institution, a subject on which a most interesting monograph might be written. Wherever golf is played his name is a password; interviewers have interviewed him, journalists made copy out of him; photographers photographed him (including in this latter connexion at least one very skilful lady amateur, who confesses to an absorbing admiration for him); artists have sketched him, with
In this iconoclastic age the destruction of records proceeds apace, and in this connexion the youngest brother, Hugh, a lad of twenty, has made himself famous.

For many years Young Tom's 77 at St. Andrews defied all and sundry assaults upon it, though on close analysis of his figures it was clear that a stroke or two could have been saved here and there. Every good round played over the green served only to accentuate the exceptional merit of his figures. But in October 1888 Hugh Kirkaldy fairly beat this 77. It is difficult in this age of progress to say what mayor may not happen, but it would hardly be rash to assert that his outward half-round, at any rate, will never even be equalled again; this was as follows: 4 4 4 4 4 4 3 2 4 = 33. To this he added 41 for the return journey, as follows: 4 3 4 4 6 4 5 6 5 = 41. 74 in all.

Extraordinary and improbable as it may seem, within nine months of this date he actually beat this score; his second record being

\[ \begin{align*}
4 & 5 & 4 & 3 & 5 & 5 & 3 & 3 & 3 \\
3 & 3 & 4 & 4 & 5 & 5 & 5 & 4 & 5
\end{align*} \]

35 out.

38 home.

In the first record he was playing against Bernard Sayers, and in his second against A. Herd and D. Leitch in a three-ball match, and on both occasions the round was the usual medal course. For purposes of comparison it may be stated that the lowest figure at which the Royal and Ancient medal has been gained is 83 (on two occasions), though in practice some five or six amateurs have succeeded in beating 80. Hugh Kirkaldy has a particularly long swing, and appears to great advantage when playing down wind; he holds his right hand a good deal round the club, and grasps very tightly with it. He is a capital holer-out, a long driver with his iron, and with a few years' experience will probably gain somewhat in consistency, when his game will become, so to speak, more consolidated than at present.
exercise, while in real tennis or in rackets something approaching to equality of skill between the players would seem to be almost necessary for enjoyment. These more violent exercises, again, cannot be played with profit for more than one or two hours in the day. And while this may be too long for a man very hard worked in other ways, it is too short for a man who wishes to spend a complete holiday as much as possible in the open air.

Moreover, all these games have the demerit of being adapted principally to the season of youth. Long before middle life is reached, rowing, rackets, fielding at cricket, are a weariness to those who once excelled at them. At thirty-five, when strength and endurance may be at their maximum, the particular elasticity required for these exercises is seriously diminished. The man who has gloried in them as the most precious of his acquirements begins, so far as they are concerned, to grow old; and growing old is not commonly supposed to be so agreeable an operation in itself as to make it advisable to indulge in it more often in a single lifetime than is absolutely necessary. The golfer, on the other hand, is never old until he is decrepit. So long as Providence allows him the use of two legs active enough to carry him round the green, and of two arms supple enough to take a 'half swing,' there is no reason why his enjoyment in the game need be seriously diminished. Decay no doubt there is; long driving has gone for ever; and something less of firmness and accuracy may be noted even in the short game. But the decay has come by such slow gradations, it has delayed so long and spared so much, that it is robbed of half its bitterness.

I do not know that I can do much better than close this desultory chapter with a brief autobiography, taken down from his own lips, of perhaps the most distinguished professional of the century—a man known by name to all golfers, even to those who have never visited St. Andrews—old Tom Morris. This transcript of a conversation held on New Year's Day, 1886, is not only interesting in itself, but contains much sound
golfing philosophy. I give it to the reader precisely in the shape in which it has been given to me:

'A gude new year t'ye, Maister Alexander, an' mony o' them! An' it's come weel in, the year has; for it's just a braw day for a mautch. Lod, sir, it aye seems to me the years, as they rise, skelp fester the tane after t'ither; they'll sune be makin' auld men o've a'. Hoo auld am I, d'ye ask, sir? Weel I was born June 16, 1821; and ye can calc'late that for yoursel'. Aye! as ye say, sir, born and bred in St. Awndrews, an' a gowffer a' ma days. The vera first time, I think, I hae mind o' mysel' I was toddlin' aboot at the short holes, wi' a putter uneath ma bit oxter.

'I was made 'prentice to Allan as a ba'-macker at eighteen, and wrocht wi' him eliven years. We played, Allan and me the-gither, some geyan big mautches—ane in parteecleer wi' the twa Dunns, Willie and Jamie, graund players baith, nane better—over fower' greens. It was a' through a braw fecht atweens—green an green—but we snoddit 'em bonnie ere the end o't. I canna ca' to mind Allan an me was iver sae sair teckled as that time; though a wheen richt gude pair o' them did their best to pit oor twa noses oot o' joint. But it was na to be dune wi' Allan an' me. An awfu' player, puir Allan! the cunningest bit body o' a player, I dae think, that iver haun'led cleek an' putter. An' a kindly body tae, as it weel fits me to say, sir, an' wi' a walth o' slee pawky fun aboot him.

'I left Allan to keep the Green at Prestwick, and was there fourteen years. Three years efter Allan deed I cam to keep the Green here; an' here I hae been sin syne. Na! sir, I niver weary o' the gemm; an' I'm as ready noo to play any gentleman as I was in ma best days. I think I can play aboot as weel yet as I did in ma prime. No, may be, drive jist sae lang a ba'; but there's no muckle odds e'en in that yet. Jist the day I was sixty-four, I gaed roon' in a single wi' Mr. H. in 81. No that ill for the "Auld Horse" as they ca' me—it'll tak' the best of the young ones, I reckon, to be mony shots better than that.
The best writers upon golf, some—notably its able exponent, whether with club or pen, the author of the 'Art of Golf' himself—have the habit of writing with some contempt of 'Style.' They are a little fond of insinuating that, provided you hit the ball, the manner is of no importance, insomuch that a not inconsiderable portion of their writing seems occupied with a melancholy Von Hartmann-like denunciation of the folly of its own creation—for the manner, the form, as distinct from the substance, is all that writing can attempt to show for us. True it is that, provided the ball be correctly struck, the manner matters little; but then this is a large proviso, and before we can go so far as to say, without qualification, that the manner or style is of no importance, we have first to make up our minds that it is no easier to strike the ball in one manner than in another. This is the point that our slogging Philistine
HE history of golf shows that the game has been played for at least four hundred years; but even if any records survived of doughty champions of the middle ages—and, so far as the writer knows, they do not—their performances would probably be regarded with less interest than those of latter-day players, who are known either personally or by reputation to the present generation; to these, therefore, we may confine our attention. It may be convenient to divide our celebrities into the two classes, Professionals and Amateurs, dealing with them in the order named. In looking back, then, some sixty years or so, the foremost figure that strikes the eye is undoubtedly the celebrated Allan Robertson: not that there were no fine players before his day—far from it, but probably it may be said, without prejudice to their memory, that none of them were so successful as he was in purely scientific execution; indeed, there are not wanting some who declare that in this
Set.—A full complement of clubs.
Shaft.—The stick or handle of the club.
Slice.—To hit the ball with a draw across it, from right to left, with
the result that it flies to the right.
Sole.—The flat bottom of the club-head.
Spoons.—Wooden-headed clubs of three lengths—long, middle,
and short—the head is scooped so as to loft the ball.
Spring.—The degree of suppleness in the shaft.
Square.—When the game stands evenly balanced, neither side
being any holes ahead.
Stance.—The position of the player's feet when addressing himself
to the ball.
Steal.—To hole an unlikely 'putt' from a distance, by a stroke
which sends the ball, stealthily, only just the distance of the
hole.
Stroke.—The act of hitting the ball with the club, or the attempt
to do so.
Stroke hole.—The hole or holes at which, in handicapping, a stroke
is given.
Stymie.—When your opponent's ball lies in the line of your 'putt,'
—from an old Scotch word, meaning 'the faintest form of
anything.' Vide 'Jamieson.'
Swing.—The sweep of the club in driving.
Tee.—The pat of sand on which the ball is placed for the first
stroke each hole.
Teeing ground.—A space marked out, within the limits of which
the ball must be teed.
Third.—A handicap of a stroke deducted every third hole.
Toe.—Another name for the nose of the club.
Top.—To hit the ball above its centre.
Two-more, Three-more, &c.—See under Odd.
Upright.—A club is said to be 'upright' when its head is not at a
very obtuse angle to the shaft. The converse of Flat.
Whins.—Furze or gorse.
Whipping.—The pitched twine uniting the head and handle.
Wrist shot.—Less than a half shot, generally played with an iron
club.