

8
LAYS OF THE LINKS

8
A SCORE OF PARODIES

LAYS OF THE LINKS

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FOR

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LAYS OF THE LINKS

A SCORE OF PARODIES

By J. Masson

*'For games may come and games may go,
But Golf goes on for ever!'*

EDINBURGH: DAVID DOUGLAS

1895

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I.

A PSALM OF GOLF.

TELL me not in mournful measure,

“Golf is but an empty dream !”

Good advice is golden treasure,

For things are not what they seem.

Golf is real ! Golf is quirky !

And the drive is not its goal ;

He whose style is stiff and jerky

Oft contrives to win the hole.

Pure enjoyment without sorrow

None can reach by constant play ;

Try to golf that each to-morrow

Finds you better than to-day.

Links are long, and Time is fleeting,

And a drive well got away

Won't avail you when competing

'Gainst an adept's iron play.

Practise putting when you've leisure,

Keep your temper in control ;

Don't forget your six-inch measure,

You may need it at the hole.

Trust no caddie, howe'er pleasant,
If you wish to win your match ;
Play as if he were not present,
And your form were always scratch.

Games of great men all remind us
We can make our play unique,
And, departing, leave behind us
Divots from the club or cleek ;

Divots that perhaps another,
Tramping by the breezy main,—
A forlorn, enraged brother,—
Seeing, shall put back again.

Last of all, "be up"; and practise

Every moment you can spare ;

If you persevere, the fact is

You'll become a first-class player.

II.

THEY'LL NONE OF THEM BE MISSED.

As some day it may happen that you're going for a
round,

I've got a little list—

I've got a little list

Of some horrible offenders who might well be
underground,

And who never would be missed—

Who never would be missed !

There's the pestilential nuisances who crawl along
the links—

All people who won't play with you unless you
play for drinks—

6 *THEY'LL NONE OF THEM BE MISSED*

All persons without partners who imagine they
 play scratch,

And would rather spoil your single and make up a
 three-ball match,

And all third persons who on giving *good* advice
 insist,

 They'd none of them be missed—

 They'd none of them be missed !

There's the man who laughs out loudly when you're
 driving off the tee

 (And who cannot well resist)—

 I've got him on the list !

And the caddies who won't carry clubs except at
 twice their fee,

 They never would be missed—

 They never would be missed !

There's the man who scores correctly, makes you
putt out every ball

Although so close beside the hole, a breath would
make it fall ;

And the lady staying with you, whom you don't
like to deny,

Who has never seen what golf is, but would rather
like to try,

And who couldn't use an iron, for so slender is her
wrist,

I don't think she'd be missed---

I'm sure she'd not be missed !

There's another kind of nuisance which just now
is rather rife,

The golfing humourist,---

I've got him on the list !

8 *THEY'LL NONE OF THEM BE MISSED*

And the men who think the game is as important
as their life,

They'd none of them be missed—

They'd none of them be missed!

And apologetic partners of a compromising kind ;

And the men who hack up all the turf, and say,

“Oh, never mind”!

The fellows who drive into you when putting on
the green,

And who say, “We're very sorry, and we really
didn't mean

To go so near the hole this shot”—I've got them
on the list!

For they'd none of them be missed—

They'd none of them be missed!

III.

THE LOST BALL.

STANDING one day at the golf-course,

I was weary and ill at ease ;
And my forearms waggled idly
Over my trembling knees.

I know not how I was playing,
Or what my form might be ;
But I struck one swish with my driver
At the ball that lay on the tee.

It winged its way through the twilight,
Like a shaft from an archer's bow ;
And it fled from my fevered presence
At a speed I can never know.

It shot through the air so swiftly,
That it baffled the keenest sight ;—
Has one of the heavenly bodies
Arrested its marvellous flight ?

I beat all my former records
By that one splendid ball,
That sped both onwards and upwards
As if it were loth to fall.

A search, but alas ! a vain one,
For that ball I have begun,
Which strayed from the path of the orbit
The earth takes round the sun.

I fear it is resting somewhere
Beyond the abodes of men :—
It may be in one of the planets
I shall find that ball again !

IV.

THE WINNER OF THE QUEEN'S
TROPHEE.

WHEN I was a lad I served a term
As 'prentice boy to a club-maker's firm ;
I tied the whippings and I boiled the glue,
And I polished up the irons till they looked like
new.

I polished up the irons so successfuller
That now I am the Winner of the Queen's
Trophee !

As apprentice boy I made such a mark,
That I once was taken for a man called Park ;
I could fix in a rivet and put on a new head,
I could varnish all the brassies and fill in fresh lead.

I varnished all the brassies so splendidee
That now I am the Winner of the Queen's
Trophee !

As a first-class artificer I made such a name
That my clubs were purchased by exponents of the
game ;

I could get half-a-guinea for a special shaft,
And my heads were a model of my handicraft.
I charged such a price for my artilleree
That now I am the Winner of the Queen's
Trophee !

14 *THE WINNER OF THE QUEEN'S TROPHEE*

Of golfing knowledge I acquired such a grip,
That they offered to take me into partnership ;
This offer I considered, but at last declined,
And I set myself to practise with an ardent mind.

I practised up the game so ardently
That now I am the Winner of the Queen's
Trophee !

I became such a swell that I was sent
To represent my county at a tournament ;
I beat all the records of the local men,
And they never thought of asking me to play
again.

I beat all their records so disgracefully
That now I am the Winner of the Queen's
Trophee !

Now amateurs all, whoever you may be,
If you're anxious to rise to the top of the tree,
In every kind of hazard keep your head quite cool
And be careful to be guided by this golden rule:—

Take half the holes in four, and the other
half in three :

And you all may be the Winner of the
Queen's Trophee !

V.

THE GOLFER.

'Tis the voice of the golfer; I heard him complain,
"They've put me away back at scratch once
again."

This once was his form; but his boasting proficient
Made up for the skill which was sadly
deficient.

This policy robbed him of sleep and of slumber;
For nights he had dreamt he should get
quite a number;

But he thought if he practised each day till the
match,

He almost might win though he started at
scratch.

I passed by his garden, and saw him, poor soul !

Lofting balls over bushes stone dead at a
hole ;

There were flower-pots and pitchers, and clothes
out to dry,

There were baskets and sand-heaps, his skill
to defy.

I made him a visit, still hoping to see

That his practice would stand him good
stead at the tee ;

But his luck clean forsook him, and full of reproaches,

He utterly failed in his drives and approaches.

Said I then to my heart, "Here's a lesson for me,
That man's but a picture of what I might
be";

But thanks to my handicap, good luck and fettle,
*With fifteen to start with, I collared the
medal!*

VI.

THE COMMITTEE'S LOT.

WHEN a meeting has been called of the Committee

For the purpose of adjusting handicaps,

Or for any other purpose, it's a pity

That their language is as loud as thunder-
claps.

Their feelings they with difficulty smother

When some handicapping duty's to be done.

Ah! take one consideration with another,

The Committee's lot is not a happy one.

When suggestions come from any of the members,

When complaints are freely made about the
drinks,

The Committee very suddenly remembers

An important piece of business on the links ;

And before they get it settled with each other,

A most unseemly quarrel has begun.

Ah ! take one consideration with another,

The Committee's lot is not a happy one.

VII.

THE FINAL TIE.

Not a hum was heard, not an audible note,

As our steps to the tee-ground we hurried ;

Not a golfer would speak till they'd played their
shot,

Lest the men who were driving got flurried.

We followed them slowly with anxious tread

And a zeal for our clubsman's credit ;

(A match, understand you, was then being played

In which each meant to win, for he said it).

No useless applause escaped our breast
 When close to the hole-side we found him ;
For he golfed like a champion playing his best,
 With his scarlet coat around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said
 As the iron shots were delivered ;
But we steadfastly gazed at the ball that lay dead
 At the lip of the hole, as it quivered.

We thought, as we followed the hard-fought game,
 And hole after hole was divided,
How the foe and the stranger would joy in our
 shame
 If the vict'ry for him were decided.

Lightly he'd talk of the match he had gained,
And over the conquest rejoice him !
But little he'll speak, and his soul will be pained
If he lose ! For misfortune annoys him.

But half of the heavy match was played
When our clubsman showed signs of pre-
vailing ;
And not far behind us a statement was made
That his foe was suddenly failing.

Slowly but surely he brought him down,
Winning four or five holes in succession ;
The foe heaved a sigh when he lost his renown,
And made use of a nameless expression !

VIII.

THE THREE GOLFERS.

THREE golfers went out for a game in the West,
Away in the West as the sun went down ;
Each thought that in moonlight he'd vanquish the
rest ;
And the caddies stood watching them out of
the town.
For men must play ; and women must weep
When their husbands go golfing instead of to sleep ;
And the club-house bar is closing.

*Three Fishers went golfing,
'38-10-24*

Three wives sat up for their swains that night,

And they talked each one of her last new
frock ;

A theme that amused them till morning light,

And prevented them hearing the strokes of
the clock.

But men must play ; and women will weep

If clubs cost a fortune, and dresses are cheap,

And their husbands won't buy them a
new one.

Three bodies were found on the club-house floor

In the morning, surrounded by over a score
Of bottles and tumblers, and who knows what
more ?

When the housekeeper opened the smoking-
room door.

The men didn't play ; nor the women weep,
But they all went to bed, and had a good sleep ;
So good-bye to an evening's carousing !

IX.

THE LIFTED BALL.

I stood on the links at mid-day,
As the clocks were striking the hour,
And I heard a voice in the distance
Behind me crying out "Fore."

I had barely played my second,
To the hole beside the sea,
When I heard a golf ball falling
A very few yards from me.

And far away in the distance,
I saw the couple behind ;
The blaze of their flaming faces
Betrayed their anxious mind.

Among some long black palings
Their snow-white golf-ball lay,
Till a laddie that came from the ocean
Seemed to lift it and bear it away.

As sweeping, eddying past me,
Rushed the belated boy,
The ball fell out of his pocket ;
I picked it up with joy.

And, like that urchin rushing
 Away from his childish fears,
A flood of thoughts came o'er me
 That filled my eyes with tears.

How often, O, how often,
 In the days that had gone past,
I had sneaked by those selfsame palings,
 And nipped up a ball at last!

How often, O, how often,
 I had done the same as he ;
I had picked up the "Ax gutty,"
 When I knew that none could see!

My heart was hot and restless,
And my life was full of care,
And the tiny little golf-ball
Seemed greater than I could bear.

But now it has fallen from me,
It lies buried in the deep ;
For I dropped it into the river
Like a thing I could not keep.

And whenever I pass that river,
My heart is suffused with fears ;
Like the odour of brine from the ocean
Comes the thought of other years.

And I think how many thousands
Of club-encumbered men,
Each bearing his burden of golf-sticks,
Have lost their balls since then.

I see the same procession
Still passing to and fro ;
The young player hot and restless,
The old, subdued and slow.

And for ever and for ever,
As long as they can't be seen,
As long as aught can hide them
From the players on the green,

The boys will sneak round these palings,
And the golf-balls disappear ;
And the players shall search, but vainly,
For the balls they send in here.

X.

CADDIE AND I.

BY road and river,
Bunker, whin, or sand,
My Caddie's ever
Standing just at hand—
Creeping under shelters gladly
When outside the weather's wet,
Playing well and playing badly,
Counting all the holes I get.

Ah ! it is gay, every day,
Fair and stormy weather,
Caddie and I, wandering by,
Over the links together.

Down in a hollow
Oftentimes I lie,
Caddie's sure to follow
At my side close by,
Cheering me in awkward places,
Keeping up my flagging zeal ;
Not like others, whose grimaces
You don't see, but always feel.

Ah ! it is gay, every day,
Fair and stormy weather,
Caddie and I, wandering by,
Over the links together.

On, on, for ever,
Till the contest ends,
Who shall dissever
Us two trusty friends?
Who can show the path before me,
Make my future bright appear,
Make me win when I am "dormy,"
Like my trusty caddie here?

Ah ! it is gay, every day,
Fair and stormy weather,
Caddie and I, wandering by,
Over the links together.

XI.

A TALE OF A BEGINNER'S PROGRESS.

I ONCE was asked by men of fame
To join a golfing party ;
And, though I didn't know the game,
I got a welcome hearty.

From thirty iron clubs I bought
Some score as my selection,
For wooden ones I little thought
Should be in my collection.

At last a friend said, "Now, you go
And buy yourself a driver,
For games may come and games may go,
But Golf goes on for ever!"

At first I couldn't hit the ball ;
Advice I left unheeded ;
But since I've learned, I'll tell you all
How I at last succeeded.

With many a club my balls I hack,
Like many another fellow,
And many a time the globe I whack
With heads both black and yellow.

I golf about, and in and out,
 With here a horrid paling,
And here and there some whins about,
 And here and there a railing,

And here and there a beastly road
 I fall in as I travel,
And many a mound of grass fresh mowed,
 And heaps of sand and gravel.

And, worst of all, that place I know
 Where flows a blooming river,
And games may come and games may go,
 But Golf goes on for ever!

Anon some lawns and grassy plots

My anxious eye discovers ;

I play the gentlest, sweetest shots

And think my skill recovers.

I press, I scuff, I slice, I top,

My irons divots cutting ;

And soon I find my score mounts up

Despite my skilful putting.

I murmur to myself a prayer,

I muster up my forces ;

I miss the globe ! and then declare

“How difficult the course is !”

Until at last I lose my ball

 In that confounded river !

And games may rise and games may fall,

 But Golf goes on for ever !

XII.

THE BETTER GREEN.

"I HEAR thee speak of the better green,

So often heard of, so seldom seen.

Brother, O where is that marvellous plain?

Shall we not seek it, and play once again?

Is it where the flower of the daisy blows—

The ball invisible under your nose?"

—“Not there, my boy, not there!”

“Is it where the feathery golf-ball flies
At a lightning speed, under sunny skies?
Or midst the green umbrage of hawthorn trees
Whose fragrant blossoms perfume the breeze?
And strange light flags that are stuck upon poles
Point out the way to invisible holes?”

—“Not there, my boy, not there!”

“Is it far away in some region queer,
Where the river’s broad, and the road too near,
Where the bunkers are hidden from mortal view,
And the railway hazards are ‘Lift and count two?’
And your legs get torn with the prickly whin?
Is it there, dear brother, that better green?”

—“Not there, my boy, not there!”

"I have not seen it, my gentle boy,
But I have heard of its endless joy.
Dreams cannot picture a green so fair,
Caddies and roughs cannot enter there ;
Play doth not ruin its matchless turf,
And balls don't get lost in the seething surf ;

—It is there, my boy, it is there !"

XIII.

THE SEVEN CLUBS OF GOLF.

ALL the world's a links,
And all the men and women merely players :
They have their caddies dumb and garrulous ;
And each man in his round plays many balls,
His tools being seven weapons. The first, the
driver,
Swaying and wagging in the golfer's arms.
And then the driving cleek, or else the brassey
With shining varnished head, sweeping, like flail,

Handwritten:
The Seven Clubs of Golf
133-11-11

But harmlessly, the ball. And then the iron,
Glowing like furnace, with a polished handle
Made to its master's measure. Then the niblick,
Full of strange curves, and weighty like the lead,
Useful in hazard, sudden and quick in movement,
Seeking the owner's extrication
Even from the bunker's mouth.

And then the loftier,
An instrument of quaint and strange device,
With neck severe and head of formal cut ;
Full shots go only moderate distances,
For so he plays his part. The sixth club lifts
Out of a cup ; a difficult iron tool
Call'd " Mashie," head laid back, and bulge on side,
With square-cut nose, well-made ; a world too big
For its short shaft ; and its thick iron face

Gets well below the globe, tears up the turf,
And hashes all the ground. Last club of all
That's used to end this game of mystery
Is what was once a putter, but now smashed,
Sans head, sans bone, sans shaft, sans everything.

XIV.

THE DISHONEST CLUB-VENDOR.

By his vice a golf-club maker

Once designed to make his name ;

But this vice was not of iron—

'Twas a horrid stratagem.

With a copy of a Philp head

He would try and run you in ;

But somehow his well-made copy

Didn't look quite genuine.

From a neighbouring plantation
Had the apple-wood been brought ;
Day and night the anxious carver
At his toil untiring wrought :

He had matched the grace and colour,
He had followed every curve,
Made the one just like the other,
Scarce a flaw could you observe.

Then a voice said, " Oh, you idiot !
Don't you think you'll humbug me ;
That's a stick Philp never handled
And his eyes did never see."

“Don't you see his name upon it?”

Said the vendor with a frown;

“Yes, I see the name upon it,

But it's printed upside down.”

Oh, thou knavish, lying villain!

Take this lesson to thy heart:—

Forgeries will only cheat us

If correct in every part.

XV.

I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER.

I REMEMBER, I remember,
The links where I was bred,
The little caddie's shining face,
His uncombed, curly head ;
He always gave the proper club,
And made a perfect tee ;
And now I fondly wish, sometimes
His equal I might see.

*Remember, I remember, I remember
The links where I was bred,
The little caddie's shining face,
His uncombed, curly head,
He always gave the proper club,
And made a perfect tee,
And now I fondly wish, sometimes
His equal I might see.*

I remember, I remember,
The bunker on the hill,
The dyke, the road, the tiny burn
That flowed down by the mill ;
The balls we lost among the whins ;
And when my brother broke
A club I lent him for a shot,
And beat me by a stroke.

I remember, I remember,
When first I learnt the swing,
I thought that balls must fly as swift
As swallows on the wing ;
The balls were made of feathers then
That are so heavy now ;
And if you lost one lent to you
There was a fearful row !

I remember, I remember,
The clubs of bygone years,
And even yet their slender shafts
Will move my eyes to tears :
It is a childish innocence !
But now 'tis little joy
To know I can't play half so well
As when I was a boy !

XVI.

THE GOLF-BALL AND THE CLUB.

I DROVE a golf-ball into the air,
It fell to earth I know not where ;
For so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

My golf-club, too, flew into the air,
It fell to earth I know not where ;
“ Now, who has sight so strong and clear,
That it can follow both golf-club and sphere ? ”

I shot a golf-ball into the air

1888-1889

Long, long afterwards (it's a fact!)

 I found my golf-ball sadly hacked ;
And my club, that had once been to mend,
 I found again in the bag of a friend.

XVII.

THE SQUIRE'S SON.

THERE was a youth, and a well-beloved youth,
And he was a squire's son,
Who betook himself to a pastime queer
From which he derived much fun.
But when his friends did understand
His fond and foolish mind,
They sent him away to a far country
And kept his clubs behind.

And when he came to that distant shore,

The weather being hot and dry,

He set him down upon a green bank,

And a golfer came passing by.

He started up with a colour so red,

His feelings he could not restrain :—

“The loan of a club, kind sir,” he said,

“Will rid me of much pain.”

“Before I lend you a club, good friend,

Pray tell me your favourite green,

And how many strokes you take to the round

If you're hitting your golf-ball clean?”

“My links are Leven, kind sir,” he said,

“And my friends, they think me cracked,

For they've sent me away to this far country,

And my clubs they have not packed.”

“If you’re from Leven, then take my clubs,
My iron and mashie also ;
And we will to some first-rate links,
Where no man shall us know.
But stay a moment, thou goodly youth,
My clubs are no use to you ;
They can only be used by left-handed men,
And so, my good friend, Adieu !”

XVIII.

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS.

AH ! what pleasant visions haunt me

As I gaze upon the links,

When the sun, his journey ended,

In the dim horizon sinks.

Shots with drivers, shots with brassies,

That we read of in the books,

Shots with niblicks, shots with mashies,

Holes in two, and other flukes !

Most of all a cherished mem'ry
 Haunts me oft and tarries long,
Of a certain famous tee-shot
 That I hit both clean and strong.

Like a bullet from a rifle,
 Sped my "gutter" through the air!
I shall never drive its equal,
 Oh, that ball was passing fair!

How I watched its every movement
 Till it almost ceased to roll!
I was positive I saw it
 Drop into the tiny hole.

With a passionate excitement

My opponent reached the green ;

His expression was the wildest

That could possibly be seen ;

And his soul was full of wonder

As his voice the silence broke—

“ Jamie, for the love of heaven !

Teach me too that wondrous stroke.”

“ Wouldst thou,” so I gently answered,

“ Learn the secret of success ?

Slowly back ; and keep your optic

On the ball, and do not press.”

In each ball that's driven fairly,
As it leaves the sandy tee,
I behold that famous tee-shot
And its possibility.

And my soul is full of longing
For the secret of success—
Slowly back ; and keep your optic
On the ball, and do not press.

THE FREE AND FROLICKING
FOURSOME.

A FIG for a game at shinty !

A fig for a football match !

There are other games in plenty

That are only fit to watch ;

A fig for the dreary bowling,

Which really is absurd ;

On the smart game of cricket, though you play on

a fast wicket,

I will not say a word.

You should see me drive a golf-ball,
You should see me play a round !
You should see the divots flying
When I play in open ground !
It would drive a partner crazy
To see my shouldlers go !
For a free and frolicking foursome
Is the jolliest fun I know !

I have played on courses inland,
I have played beside the sea ;
I have played away in Finland,
I have played in Ashantee ;
With every kind of partner,
And every kind of ball ;

I have even had to suffer by playing with a duffer
Who couldn't hit the globe at all.

You should see me drive a golf-ball, etc.

I know I am not steady,

But every one's the same ;

And in the club already

I've made myself a name.

I've played in ladies' foursomes

At the peril of my life :—

You know, what I'm afraid is, that one of those
said ladies

Designed to be my wife.

You should see me drive a golf-ball, etc.

This lady wore those dresses
Divided in the skirt—
I paid her no addresses,
Nor even meant to flirt ;
But somehow we got friendly,
I cannot tell you how ;
Our attachment grew to passion in a very rapid
fashion,
And we are married now.

You should see me drive a golf-ball, etc.

But now my gait is broken
And my locks are getting few—
The symptoms that betoken
My bidding life Adieu ;

But I cannot stop my golfing
Until I'm on the shelf ;
If they think me such a bore, and won't ask me
any more,
I'll play it by myself !

You should see me drive a golf-ball,
You should see me play a round !
You should see the divots flying
When I play in open ground !
I'll keep my game in practice,
So long as my strength don't give ;
And I'll have my frolicking foursome
The longest day I live !

XX.

INDOOR PRACTICE.

THAT grooved maiden, with white paint laden,
Whom golfers call the ball,
Glides glimmering o'er the carpeted floor,
Or the waxcloth in the hall ;
And whenever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only my ears can hear,
May have broken the jug on my warm hearthrug,
I can almost be heard to swear ;

And I laugh to see her whirl and flee
Like a well-struck billiard-ball,
As I putt into hats laid on cocoa-nut mats
That are strewed about in the hall.
It's all very fine! But I draw the line
When I hear the missus call.

138-10-2-4

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