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QUOTES From
The
BEST!

Miss HARDING Is COMING

"Heard the news?" demanded Chilvers, approaching the table where Marshall, Boyd, and I were smoking on the broad veranda of the Woodvale Golf and Country Club. We shook our heads with contented indifference. It was after luncheon, and the cigars were excellent.

"Where's LaHume?" grinned Chilvers. "Where's our Percy? He must hear this."

"LaHume and Miss Lawrence are out playing," languidly answered Marshall. "What's happened? Don't prolong this suspense."

Miss Ross and Miss Dangerfield turned the corner and Chilvers saw them. Chilvers is married, but has lost none of his effervescence and consequently retains his popularity.

"Come here," he called, motioning to these two charming young ladies. "I've got something for you! Great news; great news!"

"What is it?" asked Miss Ross, her deep-brown eyes brightening with curiosity.

"Another heiress coming!" announced Chilvers, with the bow of a jeweller displaying some rare gem "--another heiress on her way to Woodvale! This is going to be a hard season for such perennial bachelors as Smith, Boyd, Carter, and others I could name. You girls will have your work cut out when this new heiress unpacks her trunks and sets fluttering the hearts of these steel-plated golfers."

"Who is it?" impatiently demanded the chorus. Chilvers has all the arts of an actor in working for a climax.

"Miss Grace Harding; that's all!" said Chilvers.

"The famous beauty?" cried Miss Ross.

"Last season's society sensation in Paris and London?" exclaimed Miss Dangerfield.

"Daughter of the great railway magnate?" asked Marshall.

"The one to whom Baron Torpington was reported engaged?" I added.

"You all have guessed it the first time," laughed Chilvers. "She's the only daughter of Robert L. Harding, magnate, financier, Wall Street general, the man who recently beat the pirate kings down there at their own game. How much is Harding supposed to be worth, Smith?"

"Thirty millions or so," I replied.

"Well, I wish I had the 'so.' That would keep me in golf balls for a while," Chilvers continued, turning his attention to the ladies. "What show have you unfortunate girls against a combination like that? And think of Percy LaHume! What will that poor boy do? Percy heads for the richest heiress of each season with that same mighty instinct which leads a boy to cast wistful glances at the largest cut of pie. He thought the heiresses had quit coming, and now this happens; but he has gone so far in his campaign for the hand and cheque-book of Miss Lawrence, that he cannot stop quick without dislocating his spine. I doubt if that poor little Lawrence girl will ever have more than five millions."

"Never mind Percy and his prospects," said Marshall. "Who told you that Miss Grace Harding is coming to Woodvale?"

"Carter told me," replied Chilvers. "Carter knows them. The whole Harding family is coming, which includes Croesus, his wife, and their fair daughter, aged nineteen or thereabouts. Ah! why did I marry so soon?"

Mrs. Chilvers was standing back of him and soundly boxed his ears.



"How does it happen that the Hardings are coming here?" asked Mrs. Chilvers, when told the cause of this excitement. "Are they Mr. Carter's guests?"

"Mr. Harding is a charter member of Woodvale," I informed her. "For some unknown reason he joined the club when it started, but has never been here, and I doubt if he has ever

played golf. He is the owner of the majority of the bonds issued against this clubhouse."

"I wonder if Miss Harding plays golf?" said Boyd.

"Golf is not among the list of accomplishments mentioned by those writers who pretend to know all about her," remarked Chilvers. "I have been forced to learn from a casual reading of society events that this remarkable heiress is without an equal as an equestrienne, that she paints, sings, drives a sixty-horse-power Mercedes with a skill and a courage which discourages the French chauffeurs, and does other athletic and artistic feats, but I have yet to learn that she golfs."

"I presume," I said, "that she will take up the game, and also the turf. The three Hardings doubtless will form one of those delightful family parties which add so much to the merriment of a golf course. I can shut my eyes and see them hacking their way around the links; the daughter pretty and more anxious to show off the latest Parisian golfing costumes than to replace a divot; the father determined, perspiring, and red of face, and the mother stout and always in the way."

"Isn't Mr. Smith the incorrigible woman-hater?" exclaimed Mrs. Chilvers. "You did not talk that way before you became so infatuated with golf, Mr. Smith."

"I am not a woman-hater," I protested, "but I--I don't like to----"

"Some day Smith will meet a fair creature on the golf links and lose his drive and his heart at the same time," declared Chilvers. "That was the way I was tripped up and carried into bondage," he added, his hand wandering to his wife's waist.

"With the exception of Mrs. Chilvers," I said, and I came very near making no exceptions, Miss Ross and Miss Dangerfield having left us--"with the exception of Mrs. Chilvers, I have yet to see the woman who shows to advantage with a golf regalia. If Miss Harding is beautiful enough to overcome the handicap which always attaches to the female golf duffer, she can give Venus odds and beat her handily."

"You will meet a golfing Venus some day," smiled Mrs. Chilvers, willing that her sex should be attacked so long as she was exempt.

"That's what he will," added Chilvers; "I'm agile, but I slipped."

"The artists who depict the woman golfer as graceful and attractive," I continued, "must draw from imagination rather than from models. In my humble opinion a woman shows to better advantage climbing a steep flight of stairs than in any possible posture in striking a golf ball."

"The ladies--God bless 'em--and keep them off the links!" muttered Marshall.

"Why, Charlie Marshall!" exclaimed Mrs. Quivers. "I shall see that your wife hears that!"

"Don't tell her; she'll beat him terribly," warned Chilvers. "Did you ever hear, Boyd, why our friend Smith is so sour when he sees a lady on these links?"

Chilvers has told that story on me many times, but Boyd declared he had not heard it.

"As you know," began Chilvers, "Smith was born on this farm. It's the ancestral Smith homestead, and Smith's relatives were very indignant when he leased it to the Woodvale Golf and Country Club. What was the name of that maiden aunt of yours, Smith?"

"My Aunt Sarah Emeline Smith," I replied.

"Yes, yes! Well, Aunt Sarah Emeline was especially incensed over this act of sacrilege on Smith's part," continued this historian, and he followed the facts closely, "and only

once since has she stepped foot on the broad acres where her happy girlhood was spent. It was my good-fortune to meet her on that occasion, and I shall never forget it."

"Neither shall I," I said.

"On her visit here Aunt Sarah Emeline persisted in wandering over the links. She had on a wonderful bonnet, and through it she glared disdainfully at the members of the club who yelled 'Fore!' at her. She was headed for the old mill, which now is used as a caddy house. I was playing the last hole and thought she was well out of line of a brassey, so I fell on that ball for all I was worth. I sliced it; yes, I sliced it badly."

Chilvers paused and seemed lost in thought.

"Did it hit her?" asked Boyd.

"Of course it hit her," resumed Chilvers. "Aunt Sarah Emeline is more than plump, and since it did not hit her in the head I can't see how it could have hurt her. She certainly was able to stoop down, pick up that ball and throw it in the pond--and it was a new ball. I ran toward her and apologised the best I could, and what she said to me made a lasting impression. I suppose, Smith, that it was the most expensive sliced ball ever driven on these links?"

"Very likely," I sadly replied. "The following day I received a letter from Aunt Sarah Emeline informing me that she had cut me out of her will. And you still slice abominably, Chilvers."

"Thus you see that Smith has solid reasons for his prejudice against the gentler sex as golfists," concluded Chilvers.

I entered a general denial, and the conversation drifted into other channels. As a matter of fact, my dislike of the woman golfer is based on different grounds.

A pretty woman is a most glorious creature, and I yield to no one in my admiration of the fair sex, but a woman is out of her proper environment when she persists in frequenting a golf course designed for men who are experts at the game.

When I see women on the broad verandas of the Woodvale Club, or when I see them strolling along the shaded paths or indulging in tennis, croquet, and other games to which they are physically fitted, I know that they possess tact and discrimination, but when I see them ahead of me on the golf links--well, it is different.

Women may gain in health by attempting to play golf, but they do so at the expense of shattered masculine nerves and morals. When our board of management decided to permit the ladies to have free use of the course at all times except when tournaments are in progress, I resigned as director, but what good did it do?

A woman never is so tenacious of her rights as when she is in the wrong. I wonder if that is original?

I know of no agony more acute than to be condemned to play golf with women when there is a chance to get in a foursome with good scratch men. The dyspeptic compelled to fast while watching the progress of a banquet, must suffer similar torture.

"What's the use of sitting here and talking?" demanded Chilvers. "It has cooled off; let's have a foursome. Marshall and I will play you and Boyd, Smith. What do you say?"

At this instant the head waiter appeared and said Mr. Thomas wished me to come to his table for a moment. Thomas was on the other side of the veranda, but I had a suspicion of what was in store for me and arose with a sinking heart.

Thomas is the only good player in the club who is willing to make up a foursome with women, or, as it is most properly called, a "mixed foursome." I never saw one which was not mixed before many holes had been played.

Just as I anticipated, I found Thomas at a table with Miss Ross and Miss Dangerfield. Both are so pretty it is a shame they attempt to play golf.

"We are planning a foursome and Miss Dangerfield has chosen you for her partner," began Thomas, who knows exactly how I feel about such matters and who delights to lure me into trouble.



"If you and Miss Dangerfield will give Miss Ross and me two strokes," proposed Thomas, "we will play you for the dinners."

I felt sure it was a put-up job, but what could I say?

"I did not dare choose you for my partner, Mr. Smith," interposed Miss Dangerfield. "I know it is tiresome for a good player to go pottering around the links with women at his heels, and only suggested a game if you had no other engagements."

"Mr. Smith dare not plead another engagement," asserted Miss Ross, her dark eyes flashing a challenge. She is a lovely girl, but digs up the turf terribly.

"Smith has no game on. He has been over there talking for an hour," added Thomas, before I could say a word. I could have murdered him.

"I am delighted, and it is kind of you to ask me," I lied most effusively. "It is an easy game for us, Miss Dangerfield."

"Do not be too sure," scornfully laughed Miss Rosa. "Mr. Thomas is a splendid player."

"But he cannot equal Mr. Smith," declared my loyal partner. "Oh, Mr. Smith, I have heard so much of your long drives and wonderful approach shots! It is so good of you to play with us."

"It is an unexpected pleasure," I replied, rather ashamed of myself.

I have no patience to describe in detail the game which followed. I am usually sure on a drive, but I topped five out of the eighteen and popped half of the others into the air.

Miss Dangerfield distinguished herself by missing her ball four successive times from the tee. This is not the female record for this feat, so I am informed, but it is a very creditable performance for a young lady who selects a scratch player for her partner.

Miss Ross played my ball by mistake on two occasions, and on one of them succeeded in almost cutting it in half. It is a mystery to me why a woman cannot keep track of her own ball, when as a rule she does not knock it more than twenty yards.

The ball she hits is usually a dirty, hacked-up object, but when she goes to look for it she imagines that by some miracle it has been transformed into a clean, white, and unmarked sphere, which has been driven for the first time.



Carter arrived at the club shortly after our "mixed foursome" had started out. He took my place, he and Boyd playing Marshall and Chilvers. Our orbits crossed several times.

Miss Dangerfield found three balls. One of them belonged to Chilvers, and he saw her find it, but he is a perfect gentleman and did not say a word. It was the one redeeming incident in the game.

Miss Dangerfield confided to me that she is making a collection of balls.

"I am awfully lucky," she said, looking critically at Chilvers' ball. "Whenever I find one I keep it as a memento of the game; that is, of course, if it is nice and clean like this one."

"As a memento?" I inquired.

"Certainly," she declared. "I have a cute little brush and some water colours. I paint the date of discovery on the ball and add it to my collection. Sometimes I paint flowers on the ball, and sometimes birds and other things. You should see my collection! Don't you think it's a real cute idea?"

"It is startlingly original," I said, and her bright and innocent smile showed her appreciation of the compliment. "How many have you in your collection?"

"Oh, lots and lots of them," she said. "I am to have a portrait of myself done in oil, showing me in a golfing costume just about to knock the ball as far as I can, and the frame will be composed of golf balls I have found. Oh, here's another lost ball!" and

she started for one which was lying on the fair green not many yards away. I knew to whom it belonged.

"Fore! Fore! Hi, hay there; drop it; that's my ball!" yelled a club member named Pepper, coming on a run from behind a bunker. Pepper is a married man, near the fifty-year mark, and he is extremely nervous and even irritable when any one approaches his ball.

"Don't touch it!" shouted Pepper, now on a dead run. "You'll make me lose the hole! Don't you know the make of the ball you're playing? Mine is a Kempshall remade."

"Oh, this is not my ball," frankly declared Miss Dangerfield. "My ball is over there, but I thought this was one which had been lost."

"I pitched it out of that trap a moment ago," insisted Pepper, "and did not take my eyes off it."

"I am sure I do not want it if it is yours!" haughtily declared Miss Dangerfield, turning indignantly away.

"Thank you," said Pepper, politely as he knows how, and we went on our way leaving him to recover his composure as best he could. I looked back and noted that he fumbled his next shot.

"If I thought as much as that of a mere golf ball I would never play the game," pouted Miss Dangerfield. "I think he is horrid, and I shall never speak to him again!"

"If he had lost the ball he would have lost the hole," I explained, anxious to extenuate Pepper's offense as much as possible.

"Suppose he did lose the old hole!" exclaimed the wronged young lady. "What does it amount to if you lose one insignificant hole when there are eighteen in all?"

I could think of nothing else to say, and had the tact to change the conversation to the unique frame for her portrait with its "lost ball" border.

"You will save material and secure a more artistic effect," I suggested, "by having an artisan cut the balls in halves. They will then lie flat to the frame, and one ball will do the service of two."

Miss Dangerfield was so taken with this idea that she speedily forgot that brute Pepper.

Coming in we were passed by Marshall, Chilvers, Carter, and Boyd. How I envied them! We stood and silently watched while each made ripping long drives. There is nothing which contributes more to a man's good opinion of himself than to line a ball straight out two hundred yards when a bevy of pretty girls is watching him.

The tendency of the woman golfer to frankly express her admiration for the strength and skill of a man who can drive a clean and long ball is her great redeeming trait when on the links.

The man who is careless of the praise of his male peers is prone to be raised to the seventh heaven of golf bliss when listening to the long-drawn chorus of "Oh!" "Wasn't that splendid!" "I could just die if I could drive like that!" and similar expressions from dainty maidens who do not know the difference between a follow through and a jigger.

An ideal golf course would be one where the members of the fair sex are content to group themselves about the driving tees and award an honest meed of praise and applause to their fathers, husbands, or sweethearts.

"You're up, Thomas," I said when the crack foursome was out of range.

Thomas basted out a screecher, and Miss Ross followed with the best shot she ever made. Miss Dangerfield missed as usual.

"I'm awfully sorry," she said, "but I'm sure you will do better than Mr. Thomas."

In my anxiety to verify her prediction I pressed, topped my ball, and it rolled into the bunker. Chilvers looked back and grinned and then said something to Marshall at which both of them laughed.

Of course we were beaten, and beaten disgracefully. Miss Dangerfield did not take it the least to heart, but the dinner did not cost her thirty-two dollars. Not that I care for the money, but it is the first time this year that my score has been more than ninety.

I can take Thomas out alone and beat him so badly he will not dare turn in his score, but in a mixed foursome he can put it all over me.

It does not take much to throw a man off his golf game. For instance: My private secretary came up from the city early this morning. Among other matters he called my attention to the fact that my N.O. & G. railway stock has dropped three points during the week. I seldom indulge in stock speculation, but was induced to buy two thousand shares of this security on what I believed to be inside information. The stock is now selling at five points below my purchase price, a paper loss of \$10,000.

"Your brokers inform me that unless you desire to take your losses it will be necessary to put up a ten-point margin," said my secretary.

"That means a cheque for \$20,000, I presume," I observed, making a hurried calculation. He said it did, and I gave it to him.

As soon as he had gone I went out with Kirkaldy, our club professional, and played a few holes before luncheon, hoping to get that confounded N.O. & G. stock affair out of my mind so that I could play a good game in the afternoon. I made the fifth hole in five, which reminded me that the cursed stock had dropped five points. As a consequence I drove wide on the next hole, and Kirkaldy won half a dozen balls from me.



In order to play a perfect game of golf one's mind must reflect no outside matter, and I shall sell that miserable stock the moment I can get out without serious loss. This should be a lesson to me.

I saw Carter a few minutes ago and he tells me he understands that the famous Grace Harding does play golf. My worst fears are confirmed.

I shall now clean my clubs and go to bed.



ENTRY NO. II

MAINLY ABOUT SMITH

It has rained all day and nothing of interest has happened. The ladies are clustered on the sheltered side of the veranda. Some are reading, others are engaged in fancy work. The leading topic of discussion is the coming of the Hardings--or rather a fruitless inquiry as to what gowns and how many Miss Grace Harding will wear.

They are due to-morrow. I wonder if old Harding knows anything about N.O. & G. stock? He probably does--and will keep it to himself.

There being nothing else to write about I shall write of myself.

As Chilvers said yesterday, I was born on the farm which now constitutes the Woodvale golf links. When my father died he willed this land and other property to me. I take it that a man has a right to do as he pleases with his own.

The old farm makes a sporty golf course, and I cannot say that I have ever regretted my action in signing the lease which transfers its use to the Woodvale Golf and Country Club for a long term of years.

I doubt if the two hundred odd acres ever yielded so large an income as I now receive semi-annually from the treasurer of the club, but this does not appeal to my Uncle Henry.

"It is an outrage," he once said to me, with unnecessary adjectives, "to use the fine old farmhouse, sacred to long generations of Smiths, as an ell to a club house."

He said other things which I will not repeat. He is a banker, and I sincerely hope Chilvers does not hit him with a golf ball. That infernal slice of Chilvers' has already cost me one legacy.

I have traced my ancestry as far back as I dare, and have a certain amount of reverence for hallowed traditions and all that sort of thing. I must admit there have been times when I have almost imagined that the shades of three generations of more or less distinguished Smiths were holding an indignation meeting to protest against this golf invasion of their mundane haunts.

Where my great-grandmother once sang over her spinning wheel there has been installed a modern shower bath. The huge old-fashioned dining-room, with its cavernous fireplace, is now lined on three sides with lockers. The place above it which was once filled with the blackened oil portrait of our original Smith is now adorned with an engraving of Harry Varden at the finish of his drive.

This picture of Varden's is said to be the best likeness yet produced of this truly remarkable man. I have studied it for hours, but cannot understand how he can grip a club as he does without hooking his ball.

All the bed-chambers on the second floor have been thrown into one large room, which is used as a gymnasium. As near as I can make out, the place where I once knelt to say my prayers is now occupied by a punching bag.

The ceiling has been removed, which, of course, does away with the attic, and trapeze ropes now hang from rafters where successive grandmothers suspended peppermint, pennyroyal and other weeds and herbs possessing medicinal or culinary virtues.

I confess it does look a bit odd, but it makes a ripping good gym.

Certain it is that the old farm never looked as beautiful as it does now. The cow pasture once flanked with boggy marshes has been drained and rolled until the turf is smooth as velvet. The cornfields have disappeared. The straggling stone walls have been converted into bunkers, and the whole area has been converted into a park.

Old Bishop owns the adjoining farm, and whenever he sees our employees at work with rollers or grass-mowers he is overcome with rage.

"The best tract of land for corn, oats or hay in the county!" he exclaims, "and you have made it the playground of a lot of rich dudes! Jack, I should think your father would turn over in his grave. I'd like to run a plow an' harrer over them puttin' greens of yours, as ye call them. You've wasted enough manure on that grass to make me rich."

Bishop does not understand or appreciate the beauties and niceties of golf.

The first tee is under an elm which was planted by the Smith who was born in 1754, and who served under Washington. Facing it is the quaint old country church where the Father of our Country has attended many services, and in which my parents were married.

A straight drive of one hundred and thirty yards will carry the ball and insure a good lie, but a sliced ball is likely to go through a window of the church. However, the church is no longer used, and besides there is no excuse for slicing a ball. Some of the members assert that the old belfry is a "mental hazard."

On the second hole it is necessary to carry the old graveyard. A topped ball or even a low one is likely to strike one of the blackened slate slabs. The grass is so thick and rank that it is almost impossible to find a ball driven into this last resting place of my ancestors.

It makes an ideal hazard.

The second time I ever played this hole I lined out a low ball which struck the tombstone of Deacon Lemuel Smith. It bounded back at least seventy-five yards, but I had a good lie and my second shot was a screaming brassie. It carried the graveyard and landed on the edge of the green.

After carefully studying my putt I holed out from twenty yards, making the hole in three after practically throwing my first shot away.

This ability to recover from an indifferent or unfortunate shot is one of the strong points of my game.

The third hole requires a hundred-and-thirty-yard drive over the brook where I used to fish when a boy, and on the fourth hole you must carry the pond. I came very near being drowned in that pond when a youngster, and I firmly believe that this is the reason I so often flub my drive on this hole.

But it is unnecessary to describe all of the eighteen holes. The links are 3,327 yards out and 3,002 yards in, a long and sporty course, the delight of the true golfer and the terror of the duffer.

Woodvale is very exclusive. The membership is limited, and hundreds of the best people in the city are on the waiting list. Our club house is one of the finest in the country. In addition to the links we have tennis courts, croquet grounds, bowling alleys and other games, but why one should care to indulge in any game other than golf is a mystery to me.

We also have bicycle and riding paths, flower gardens and all the luxuries and artificial scenic charms possible from the judicious expenditure of nearly four hundred thousand dollars. Nothing can surpass it.

I live here during the golfing season, and one is unfortunate if he cannot play nine months in the year in Woodvale. In the winter it is safer to go to Florida or California, and I propose to do so in the future rather than risk a repetition of last season's heavy snows which made golf impossible for days at a time.

My suite of rooms in the club house is as finely furnished as any in the city, and the service and cuisine are excellent.

One saves a vast amount of time by living in such a club house as that of Woodvale. The hours expended by golfers in travelling between their places of business and the links will foot up to an enormous total each year. I remain here and thus save all that time.

Not that I neglect my business; far from it. Once a week my private secretary comes to the club house from my office in the city. He brings with him letters and other matters which imperatively demand my personal attention, and I sternly abandon all else for the time being.

On the days when he is here I play twenty-four holes instead of the usual thirty-six or more, but I find the change diverting rather than otherwise. Without claiming special merit for an original discovery, I believe I have struck what may be termed the happy medium between work and relaxation.

I do not class the keeping of this diary as work for the reason that I shall not permit it to interfere with my golf. When I feel disposed to make a note of an event, an idea or a score I shall do so, but I do not propose to be a slave to this diary.

I have just returned from a walk on the veranda. Miss Ross came to me, greatly excited.

"They are here!" she exclaimed.

"Who; the Hardings?" I asked.

"No, their trunks are here. And what do you think?"

"I would not make a guess," I declared.

"Miss Harding has only six trunks, and I had seven myself."

The sweet creature was happy and immensely relieved. I forgot to ask her if any golf clubs were included in the Harding luggage.

ENTRY NO. III

MR. HARDING WINS A BET

I have met Harding, the western railroad magnate, and he is a character. His wife is in the city, but will be out here in a few days.

Harding--I call him Mister when addressing him, since he is worth thirty millions or more, and he is old enough to be my father--Harding strolled out to the first tee early this morning and stood with his hands in his pockets watching some of the fellows drive off.

I should judge him to be a man of about fifty-five, or perhaps a year or two older. He stands more than six feet, is broad of shoulder and equally broad of waist, ruddy of complexion, clear of eye and quick of motion. He is of the breezy, independent type peculiar to those who have risen to fortune with the wonderful development of our western country, and it is difficult to realise that he is a real live magnate.



His close-cropped beard shows few gray hairs, and does not entirely hide the lines of a resolute chin. He looks like a prosperous farmer who has been forced to become familiar with metropolitan conventionalities, but whose rough edges have withstood the friction. His voice is heavy but not unpleasant, and his laugh jovial but defiant. He reminds me of no one I have seen, and I shall study him with much interest.

He was with Carter, who seemed well acquainted with him, and he greeted each drive whether it was good or bad with a sneering smile. This told me that he had never played the game, and that he had all of the outsider's contempt for it. I knew exactly what he thought, for I was once as ignorant and unappreciative as he is now.

A mutual contempt exists between those who play golf and those who do not. Those who have not played are sure they could become expert in a week, if they had so little sense as to waste time on so simple and objectless a game. Those who are familiar with the game know that no man living can ever hope to approach its possibilities, and they also know that it is the grandest sport designed since man has inhabited this globe.

I have sometimes thought that this old globe of ours is nothing more nor less than a golf ball, brambled with mountains and valleys, and scarred with ravines where the gods in their play have topped their drives. The spin around its axis causes it to slice about the sun. This strikes me as rather poetic, and when I write a golf epic I shall elaborate on this fancy.

Harding has no such conception of this whirling earth of ours. He is fully convinced that it was created for the purpose of being cross-hatched with railroads, and that it never had any real utility until he gridironed the western prairies with ten thousand miles of rust and grease. I thought of that as I watched him standing by the side of Carter, his huge hands thrust deep in his pockets, his bushy head thrown back, and a tolerant grin on his bearded lips.

I was practicing putting on a green set aside for that purpose, and Carter saw me and motioned me to come to him. He introduced Harding, who shook hands and then glanced curiously at my putter.

"What do you call that?" he asked, taking it from my hand. It was an aluminum putter of my own design, and I have won many a game with it. I told him what it was.

"Looks like a brake shoe on the new-model hand-cars," he said, swinging it viciously with one hand. "How far can you knock one of those little pills with it?"

"I see that you do not play golf," I said, rather offended at his manner.

"No, there are a lot of things I do not do, and this is one of them," he replied, and then he laughed. "But let me tell you," he added, "I used to be a wonder at shinny."

I would have wagered he would make some such remark.

"Do you see that scar on the bridge of my nose?" he asked. "That came from a crack with a shinny club when I was not more than ten years old. Shinny is a great game; a great game! It requires quickness of eye and limb, and more than that it demands a high degree of courage. It teaches a boy to stand a hard knock without whimpering. Yes, sir, shinny is a great game, and all boys should play it," and he rubbed the scar on his nose tenderly.

A man who would compare golf with shinny is capable of contrasting Venice with a drainage canal, and I came near telling him so. Golf and shinny! Whist and old maid! Pink lemonade and champagne!

"No, sir, I never could see much in this golf game," said Harding, handing back my putter. "It certainly isn't much of a trick to hit one of those balls with a mallet like that. When I was your age," turning to Carter, "I could swing a maul and send a railroad spike into five inches of seasoned oak, and never miss once a week, and I'll bet that if I had to I could do it again. That was what your father used to do for a living, and if he hadn't worked up from a section boss to the presidency of a railroad you would have something else to do besides batting balls around a farm and then hunting for 'em. But I suppose you must like it or you wouldn't do it."

"I think you would find the game interesting if you took it up," suggested Carter, whose father is nearly as rich as Harding. "Smith and I will initiate you into the mysteries of the game."

"Oh, I suppose I'll have to play now that I'm here," he said, with the most exasperating complacency. "My daughter plays some, and she is as crazy about it as the rest of them. I don't see where the fascination comes in. I called the other day on a man who was once in the Cabinet. He is rich and famous, and can have anything or do anything he likes, but he spends most of his time playing golf. I went to him and attempted to induce him to represent us in a big railway lawsuit, but he said it would prevent his playing in some tournament where he expected to win five dollars' worth of plated pewter. What do you think of that? Wouldn't take the case, and there was fifty thousand in it for him! I roasted the life out of him."

"If you would drop this fool game and pay the same amount of attention to your political fortunes," I said to him, "you would have a right to aspire to the Presidency of the United States." And what do you suppose he said to me?"

I assured him that I had not the slightest idea.

"'Mr. Harding,' he said to me in perfect seriousness, when I attempted to put this presidential bee in his bonnet, 'Mr. Harding, I would rather be able to drive a golf ball two hundred and fifty feet than be President of the United States for life.' That's what he said, and I told him he was crazy, and he is so mad at me that I don't dare go near him."

"Didn't he say two hundred and fifty yards?" asked Carter, who had been listening intently. "Two hundred and fifty feet is no drive."

"Mebbe it was yards," admitted Harding, disgusted that Carter ignored the point of his story, "but let me tell you that I'd rather be President of the United States for one minute than to be able to drive one of those little pellets two hundred and fifty miles! I'll tell you what I'll do!" he exclaimed, turning fiercely on both of us. "I never tried to play this idiotic game in my life, but I'll bet the Scotch and soda for the three of us that I can drive a ball further than either of you."



"That would hardly be fair," I protested, though I was delighted at the chance to take some of the conceit out of him. I have seen many of his type before, and it is a pleasure to witness their downfall.

"Why wouldn't it be fair?" he demanded.

"Because you know nothing of the swing of a club or of the follow through," I attempted to explain.

"The follow what?" he asked.

"The follow through," I repeated.

"What the devil is the follow through?" he asked, reaching for Carter's bag. "Let me take yours and I'll try it anyhow."

"The 'follow through' is not a club," I explained when we had ceased laughing, "but it is the trick of sending the face of the club after the ball when you have hit it. It is the end of the stroke, and by it you get both distance and direction. Without a good follow through it is impossible to drive a ball any considerable distance, no matter how great the strength with which you hit it. This knack can only be acquired after much practice."

"You don't say?" he laughed. "Let me tell you that when I used to play baseball I had a 'follow through' which made the fielders get out so far when I came to bat that the spectators had to use fieldglasses to see where they were. If I hit that golf ball good and fair it will 'follow through' into the next county, and don't you forget that I told you so! Come on, boys!"

Carter looked at me and winked. There was no one waiting on the first tee, and a clear field ahead. It was agreed that Carter should have the honour, I to follow, and that Harding should drive last.

Harding stripped off his coat and waistcoat, removed his collar and rolled up his sleeves. I was impressed with his magnificent physique, and do not recall when I have seen so massive and well-formed a forearm. From my bag he selected a driver which I seldom use on account of its excessive weight, and looked at it critically.

"Pretty fair sort of a stick," he observed, swinging it clumsily and viciously, "but I'd rather have one of those hickory roots we used to cut for shinny when I was a boy. Go ahead and soak it, Carter, so that I may know what I've got to beat."

I mentally resolved to press even at the chance of flubbing. Carter hit the ball too low, and it sailed into the air barely clearing the lane, stopping not more than one hundred and fifty yards away.

"That's not so much," said Harding, grimly. "Bat her out, Smith, and then watch your Uncle Dudley!"

I carefully teed a new ball and took a practice swing or two. I felt morally certain that Harding could not beat Carter's drive, poor as it was, but I was anxious to show him how a golf ball will fly when properly struck.

I fell on that ball for one of the longest and cleanest drives I ever made, and it did not stop rolling until it was twenty yards past the two-hundred-yard post. I was properly proud of that shot, and despite his loud talk I felt a sort of pity for Harding.

"Is that considered a fairly good shot?" he asked.

"It was a good one for Smith, or for that matter for anyone," replied Carter, who was a bit sore that he had fallen down.

"It looks easy for me," calmly declared Harding stepping up to the tee. "Can you make as high a pile of sand as you want to?"

"Yes, but it is better to tee it close to the ground," advised Carter. "If you tee it high you are apt to go under it."



Ignoring Carter's advice he reached into the box, scooped out a double-handful of sand and piled it in a pyramid at least four inches high. On the apex of this he placed a new ball I had taken from my bag, and which I felt reasonably certain would be cut in two in the improbable event that he hit it. He stood back and surveyed his preparations with evident satisfaction.

It was impossible for Carter and me to keep our faces straight, but Harding paid no attention to us.

"I ought to be able to hit that, all right," he said, walking around the sand pile and viewing it from all sides. Then he stood back and took a practice swing.

He stood square on both feet, his legs spread as far apart as he could extend them. He grasped the shaft of the club with both hands, holding the left one underneath. His practice swing was the typical baseball stroke used by all novices, and I saw at a glance that in all probability he would go under his ball.

"The blamed club is too light, but I suppose it's the best you've got," he said. "It feels like a willow switch. Well, stand back and give me lots of room. Here goes!"

As he grasped the club I saw the muscles of his right forearm stand out like whipcords. His face was wrinkled in a frown, but there was, blood in his eye.

Carter and I stood well away so as to escape a flying club-head. I cannot describe how Harding made that swing; it was done so quickly that I only noted what followed.

When the club came down there was a crack that sounded like a pistol shot, and at that instant I noted that the pyramid of sand was intact. Then I saw the ball! It was headed straight out the course, curving with that slight hook which contributes so much to distance.

When I first caught sight of it I should say it was fifty feet in the air and slowly rising. I never saw a ball travel so in my life. We had sent a caddy out ahead, and he marked the spot where it landed. It was more than twenty-five yards beyond the two-hundred-yard mark, and the ball rolled forty-five yards farther, making a total of two hundred and seventy yards.

It was within ten yards of the longest drive ever made by Kirkaldy, our club professional.

The exertion carried Harding fairly off his feet, and he landed squarely on the tee. He half raised himself, and followed the flight of the ball. His shirt was ripped open at the shoulder and torn at the neck.

"If I hadn't slipped," he declared, rising to a sitting posture, "I could have belted it twice as far as that, but I guess that's enough to win."

I heard the rustle of a woman's garment.

"Why, Papa Harding!" exclaimed a voice, musical as a silver bell. "You said you never would play golf! You should see how you look!"

I turned and saw Grace Harding. She is the most beautiful creature I ever met in my life.

Before any of us could reach him, Harding scrambled to his feet. He was streaked with sand, but there was a merry twinkle in his eye.

"Did you see me soak it, Kid?" he asked, brushing the sand from his trousers, and fumbling at a broken suspender.

"You are nothing but a great big boy," she declared. "Are you sure you are not hurt, papa?"

"Hurt, nothing!" exclaimed Harding, "but I'll bet I hurt that ball. I've lost my collar button," he said, pawing about the tee with his feet. "Your eyes are sharper than mine, Kid, see if you can find it. It must be around here somewhere."

"My friend, Mr. Smith," said Carter, presenting me to Miss Harding. She did not bow coldly, as do most young ladies in our set, neither was there anything bold in accepting this most informal introduction. She acted like a good fellow should act, and frankly offered her hand, her eyes dancing with amusement.

"Smith owns this land," volunteered Harding, still hunting for the button, "but he was too lazy to work it, so he turned it into a golf course. He and Carter are great players, so I have heard, but I have been putting it all over them driving a ball, and I didn't half try at that."

"Did you hit it, papa?" she asked.

"Did I hit it?" he repeated, "Did I hit it? Ask them if I hit it. Where in thunder is that collar-button?"

And then the four of us hunted for that elusive but useful article. Miss Harding found it in a tuft of grass, and I stood and stupidly watched her while she put it in place, adjusted the collar and tied the cravat.

"Papa is very lucky in whatever he undertakes," she said, addressing me rather than Carter, so I believe. "I could have warned you that he would have beaten you, though I cannot understand how he happened to drive a ball as far as that."

She smiled and looked proudly at the huge figure of her father, who patted her on the cheek and laughed disdainfully.

Carter made some commonplace remark, but for the life of me I did not know what to say. The proud little head, the arched eyebrows, the cheeks faintly touched with a healthy tan, the little waist, the slender but perfect figure, and the toe of a dainty shoe held me in an aphasic spell. But the laughing eyes brought me out of it, and I made one of the most brilliant conversational efforts of my career.

"Do you play golf, Miss Harding?" I asked. Having thus broken the ice I experienced a vast sense of relief.

"I won a gold cup in a competition in Paris, didn't I, papa?"

"Sure thing," responded her father, "I ought to know; it cost me fifteen dollars to pay duty on that ornament."

"And I once made the course in ninety-one," continued Miss Harding.

"I don't know anything about that," said Harding. "Is ninety-one supposed to be any good?"

"It is a splendid record for a lady for eighteen holes!" I exclaimed, "and it is not a bad score for a man."

"But this was only a nine-hole course," explained Miss Harding, "and there were many of the ladies who did not do anywhere near as well as that. I have played considerably since then, and am confident that I can do much better."

"You'll have to excuse us, Kid," interrupted her father, patting her on the arm with his huge hand. "I have important business in the club house with these gentlemen, and it is a matter which takes precedence over everything else. You can tell Smith about your golf triumphs some other time."

He talked to her as if she were a child who was in the way. I suppose it does not occur to him that she is a woman grown. I would rather have remained where I was and attempted to talk to her, or even look at her, than to sip the finest Scotch whiskey ever bottled.

Now that I read this last line it does not convey much of a compliment, but I mean all that it implies. She certainly is very pretty. We made our excuses to her, and went to the club café, and I have not seen her since. She has gone to the city with her mother on a shopping tour and will not be back for several days.

I wonder how Carter became acquainted with her. He seems to know her very well, and must have met her many times. I should like to ask him, but of course that would not be the proper thing to do.

I had no idea that I would write so much as this when I started.



ENTRY NO. IV

BISHOP'S HIRED MAN

Miss Harding is still in the city, and I have added nothing to this diary for several days. She is expected back to-morrow.

I do not know how to account for it, but since the coming of the Hardings my game has fallen off several strokes. It seems impossible for me to concentrate my mind on my shots.

Ninety-one is very poor golf for nine holes, and I am sure that with practice under a capable golfer Miss Harding could do much better. She has just the figure for a long, true and swinging stroke. I shall make it a point to ask her to play before Carter gets a chance to forestall me.

Unless I am entirely in error Carter is badly smitten with Miss Harding. It also occurs to me that I have written enough about that young lady.

Mr. Harding is also in the city. I wish I had his opinion about the future of N.O. & G. railroad stock. It has gone down another point, which means the loss of two thousand dollars to me.

An odd sort of an incident happened yesterday morning. None of the scratch players was about, so I accepted an invitation to play a round with LaHume and Miss Lawrence. She is a very pretty girl, though in my opinion she is not to be compared with Miss Harding. LaHume is devoted to her, as much as he can be devoted to any one or anything, and there have been rumours now and then that they were engaged or about to be engaged, but since it has always been possible to trace these reports back to LaHume I have had my doubts of their accuracy. Miss Olive Lawrence has inherited a large fortune, and is the master of it and of herself.

LaHume has been a persistent fortune hunter, and if patience be a virtue he deserves to win. He had a tiff yesterday with Miss Lawrence, and it came about curiously enough.

The Bishop farm adjoins the club grounds on the east, and everyone for miles about knows Bishop. He has little use for anything but work and money, and he always has difficulty in keeping farm labourers, or "hired men," as he terms them.

About a month ago he employed a fellow named Wallace, who admitted that he did not know much about farming, but who said he was strong and healthy and was willing to do the best he could. It was in the haying season and Bishop was short of men, so he gave this chap a chance.

I met Bishop one day shortly after he put Wallace to work, and he told me something about him.

"He's strong an' willin' enough," said Bishop, as we stood talking over the fence, "but he surely is the blamedest, funniest hired man I ever had, an' I've had some that'd make a man quit the church. What do you think he wants?"

I assured him that I could not imagine.

"Soap in his room, and cake soap at that!" he exclaimed. "If I hadn't given it to him he'd a quit, so I had to give it to him. He takes a bath every morning, an' shaves. That's what he does! Gets up about four o'clock and goes down to the old swimming hole in the crick, paddles around a while, an' then comes back to the house an' shaves, an' then goes out an' milks an' cleans out the stables. Never saw a man wash his hands so much in my life, but accordin' to his lights he's a mighty good worker. He eats a lot, but then all hired men eats a lot. An' he reads! Brought a big trunk with him, an' in it was a lot of books in French, Dutch or some other language that no white man can understand. And fight! You know Big Dave Cole, that's been with me for years?"

I assured him that I should never forget "Big Dave" Cole. I have known him ever since he went to work for Bishop, and that was when I was a boy. From that day he has been the terror of the neighbourhood, and I have sometimes thought that even Bishop stood in fear of him.

"Wal," he said slowly and impressively, biting the end from a plug of tobacco, "this here Wallace licked the life plumb out of Big Dave no more than yesterday, an' Big Dave is that disgusted he has packed up and quit me."

"What caused the trouble?" I asked.

"Big Dave called him an English dude, an' it seems that Wallace took offense because he's Scotch," explained Bishop, "at least that's what the other men who was there when it started said. I couldn't get a word out of Wallace, who said he'd quit if I wanted him to, but I told him that a man who could lick Big Dave and come out without a scratch had the makings of a rattlin' good hired man, an' I raised his wages two dollars a month an' gave him Big Dave's room, which is bigger than the one he had. If he could milk, an' run a seeder, or a thresher, or stack oats an' corn as well as he can fight, I would give him forty dollars a month."

This incident was related to me several weeks ago, and I have made it a point to study this chap when I have met him. I should say he is about my age, twenty-five or so, and I must say that he is a good-looking fellow. He is tall, dark of complexion, broad of shoulder and narrow of loin, and certainly looks as if he was able to take care of himself. I presume that he is some college chap who cannot make his way in the profession he has chosen, and who is trying to get a financial start by working on a farm.

I am going to have a talk with him at the first opportunity, and if my suspicion is verified I shall try to find some way to give him a quicker start. I doubt if Bishop is paying him more than twenty dollars a month.

As I started to describe, LaHume, Miss Olive Lawrence and I were playing a threesome. It was along about noon when we came to the tenth tee, which is located so that a sliced ball may go into or over the country road which separates the Bishop farm from the golf course. Miss Lawrence is not an accurate player, but she drives as long a ball as any woman golfer in Woodvale.

She hit the ball hard, but sliced it, and a strong westerly wind helped deflect it to the right. It sailed over the fence, and struck in a ploughed field only a few feet from a man whom I recognized as Wallace.

He had evidently been looking in our direction, and he followed the flight of the ball. He walked up to it.

"Are you playing bounds?" he shouted, lifting his cap.

"Yes!" answered LaHume, "throw it back!"

Wallace carried a stout stick of some kind in his hand. He looked at the end of it critically, placed the ball on a clod of soil, glanced at us and called "Fore!" and then lofted that ball with as clean a shot as ever I saw, dropping it almost at LaHume's feet. He bowed again, twirled the stick about his fingers, and then turned and went toward the farmhouse.

"Well, what do you think of the cold nerve of that clodhopper?" exclaimed LaHume, staring at the retreating figure of Wallace. "I presume he has ruined that new ball."

"Not with that stroke," I said. "I wish I could make as good an approach with any club in my bag as he did with that improvised cane."

I picked up the ball and found that there was not a blemish on it.



"Wasn't he a handsome young gentleman?" murmured Miss Lawrence, whose eyes had been fixed on Wallace until he vanished behind a clump of trees. "Who is he?"

"Gentleman?" laughed LaHume, teeing the ball. "He's a farm labourer; old Bishop's hired man. One of his duties is to deliver milk every morning at the club house."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Miss Lawrence. "I presume it is impossible for him to attend to such duties and remain a gentleman."

"Not impossible, but highly improbable," laughed young LaHume, unaware that he was treading on thin ice.

"My father made his start in that way, and before he died there were many who called themselves gentlemen who were glad to associate with him," declared Miss Lawrence with a warmth uncommon to her. "What did your father do?"

"Really now, I did not mean anything," stammered LaHume, the red flushing through the tan of his face. It suddenly dawned on me that there was a period in the life of my father when he worked as a hired man in order to earn the money with which to marry my mother, and that from this humble start he was able finally to acquire the ancestral Smith farm, then in the possession of a more wealthy branch of the family. I made common cause with Miss Lawrence, and I did it with better grace from the fact that I resent the airs assumed by LaHume.

"LaHume's father founded the roadhouse down yonder," I said, pointing towards a resort which yet goes by the LaHume name, and one which does not enjoy a reputation any too savory. Of course this is not the fault of the elder LaHume, who has since made a fortune in the hotel business. I could see that the shot went home.

"I say, Smith, let's play golf and cut out this family history business," protested LaHume, who was fighting angry. "It is your shot, Miss Lawrence."

"Don't you think he is handsome, Mr. Smith?" she asked.

"Who; Mr. LaHume?" I returned, not averse to rubbing it into the descendant of the roadhouse keeper.

"Of course not," she replied, her eyes sparkling with mischief. "I mean that lovely hired man."

"He's a rustic Apollo," I said, "and it may interest our friend to know that he also combines the qualities of Hercules and Mars."

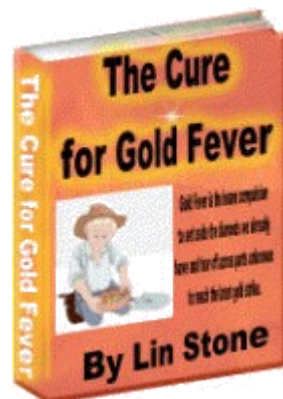
And while LaHume fumed and Miss Lawrence clapped her hands I told the story of the downfall of "Big Dave" at the hands of the quiet and cleanly Wallace, making sure that the defeat of the village bully lost nothing in its telling.

All the way back to the club house--we did not play out the remaining holes--Miss Lawrence plied me with questions concerning Wallace. Of course I know that her object was to punish LaHume, and she did it most effectively.



She pretended to believe that there is some great romance back of Wallace's present status. She pictured him as a Scotch nobleman, or the son of one, I have forgotten which, forced by most interesting circumstances to remain for a while in foreign lands. She conjured from her fancy the castle in which he was born, and over which he will some time rule, and I helped her as best I could.

I can see that it will be a long time before LaHume will ask me to make up a threesome with Miss Lawrence. I wonder what "the hired man" would think if he knew that his lucky stroke with a hickory club had created so great a furor? I have a suspicion that this was not a lucky day in LaHume's campaign for the Lawrence hand and fortune.



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ENTRY NO. V

THE EAGLE'S NEST

Miss Grace Harding is here again, and I am to play a game of golf with her tomorrow. Carter does not know it yet, but that is because I have not had a chance to tell him.

Carter is a rattling good fellow and a fine golfer--he has made Woodvale in seventy-seven; two strokes better than my low score--but he is a bit conceited; he imagines he is a lady's man, and I propose to take him down a peg.

I am certain he schemed to play with Miss Harding before I did, and he went about it in what he doubtless thought was a diplomatic way. He opened his campaign this morning by playing a round with her father. Carter furnished clubs and balls for Mr. Harding, who broke two of the clubs and lost six new balls, to say nothing of those he mutilated.

Diplomacy is not my long suit. I prefer to carry things by assault. When I saw what Carter was up to I formed a plan and put it into operation without delay. It was very simple. I walked right up to Miss Harding and asked her if she would like to play a round with me. That was this morning.

"When?" she asked, with a charming smile which told me victory was in sight.

"Right now!" I said, bold as could be.

"You are brave to ask me to play with you, after what I have told you of my game," she said, pressing down a worm cast with the toe of her dainty shoe. We were standing on the edge of the practice putting green. I am no hand to describe a woman's gowns, and in fact know nothing of them, but I recall distinctly that she was dressed in blue, with some white stuff here and there, and it was very becoming.

"Why?" I inquired.

"If I could play in eighty-five, as you and Mr. Carter do, I would not recognise one who requires from one hundred and thirty to one hundred and sixty," laughed Miss Harding.

For the life of me I cannot recall what I said in answer to this assertion, but it was something stupid, no doubt. She finally promised to play with me to-morrow, explaining that she and her father were about to go automobiling.

We strolled over to one of the practice tees, and I was delighted when she asked me to observe her swing, and advise her how to correct it. I spent half an hour doing this, and she made wonderful improvement. I hoped Carter would come along and see us, but I saw nothing of him.



While we were there, Marshall, Chilvers and Lawson passed and asked me to make up a foursome. For the first time in my life I refused, and the way those idiots looked back at me and grinned tempted me to break a club over their heads. There is no law to compel a man to play golf if he does not wish to. I figured that a rest for half a day would improve my game. The fact is, and the best golfers are coming to realise it, that a man can play so much that he goes stale.

I have just been looking back over the notes of my second entry in this diary of a golfer, and I wish to modify the statement to the effect that a woman under no circumstances appears graceful or attractive in golf attitudes.

In fact I absolutely repudiate that ungallant and prejudiced assertion. In one place I said: "If Miss Harding is beautiful enough to overcome the handicap which always attaches to the golf duffer, she can give Venus all sorts of odds and beat her handily. I have yet to see the woman who shows to advantage with a golf regalia."

I take that back, also.

To see a woman raise a golf club with a jerky, uneven stroke, and come down on the helpless turf with the head of it, as if beating a carpet, has always given me a chill and a sensation of wild rage, but there is something about the way Miss Harding does this which is actually artistic. There are combinations of discords which make for perfect harmony, and it is the same with the little eccentricities of Miss Harding's swing.

The poise of the head and shoulders, the sweep of the arms, and the undulations of the figure seem to take on an added charm from what might be called the "graceful crudity" of her stroke. I do not know why this is so, but it is a fact.

I shall never forget the attempt I once made to instruct my sister in the rudimentary principles of the swing of a golf club. She was a pretty girl; bright, lively and graceful, but after I had given her two lessons we were so mad at one another that we did not speak for weeks. It seemingly was impossible to make her distinguish between the back sweep and the follow through. She would persist in coming down on the tee with the face of her club, but at that she made a splendid marriage, and is a happy wife and mother.

Miss Harding will make a first-class golf player, and I told her so.

"Do you really think so?" she asked, after several swings, most of which would have hit the ball.

"I certainly do," I declared. "All that you need is the constant advice of someone who is thoroughly familiar with the technique of the game."

She utterly ignored this hint.

"My one ambition," she said, with a bewitching little laugh, rather plaintive, I thought, "is to drive a ball far enough so that there will be some difficulty in finding it. It must be jolly to hit a ball straight out so far that you cannot tell within yards just where it is. Do you know," and she looked really sad, "I have never lost a ball in my life?"

"How remarkable!" I exclaimed. "I have known Carter to lose a dozen at one game."

"Indeed! I think Mr. Carter is a perfectly splendid player," she declared. "I was watching him one day last week. He is so strong, confident and easy in his execution of shots. If I could drive like he does I would be willing to lose a dozen balls every time I played."

I changed the subject, and was showing her a new way to grip the club when I heard a step behind us.

"Hello, Smith! If you are going out in that buzz-wagon with me, Kid, you had better drop that stick and get a move on."

Of course it was her father. No one else would dare talk to Miss Harding like that. To hear him one would think that she was twelve years old, but I suppose fathers can do as they like.

"Fix up a ball, Kid, and let's see how far you can soak it," he said.

"I am just practicing the follow through," explained Miss Harding. "Mr. Smith has told me many things about the correct way to follow through."

"When your mother was your age she was practicing the 'follow through,' as you call it, on a scrubbing board over a wash tub," declared Mr. Harding, and he said it as if he were proud of it.

"I could do that if I had to," laughed Miss Harding, handing me the club. "Thank you, Mr. Smith. To-morrow I expect to show decided improvement. Come on, papa!"

"So long, Smith," said Harding. "I'm going to trim you youngsters at your own game before I get through with you."

I took a rest all the afternoon so as to be in shape for to-morrow. I propose to show Miss Harding that I am the peer of Carter or anyone else who plays here.

It never occurred to me that it was possible to get enjoyment out of a golf course by any method other than by playing over it, but I had keen pleasure all the afternoon in studying the men who frequent the Woodvale links. My refusal to play created a sensation, and I enjoyed that.

It is amusing to study the way in which different players go about this game. The railway station is only a few hundred yards away, and as I watched those men who came on the 1:42 train from the city the thought occurred to me that I could have picked out the good players even had I been a stranger to those who approached the club house. You can class the various types of golfers by their mannerisms, even if you have never seen them with a club in their hands. For instance there were two

members who left the station platform at the same time--Duff and Monahan. Both are men of standing in the community, and both are charter members. They started to learn the game at the same period, and both play at least five afternoons during the season, yet Monahan plays consistently in eighty-two, while Duff is fortunate to score in ninety-five. Why this woeful inferiority of Duff?

They are great friends and always play together, and they go through the same performance every time they reach the grounds.

The moment Monahan left the train he headed for the club house as if it were on fire and all of his money in its lockers. Duff says Monahan is perfectly quiet and sane until he catches the first glimpse of the links, but that his blood then begins to boil, and that he burns in a fever of haste to get a club in his hands.

Monahan barely nodded to me as he passed and rushed up stairs. In less than two minutes he was back and ready to play. As he tore out he met Duff, who had strolled complacently up the walk, stopping now and then to speak to a friend or to watch a shot.

Duff's clothes were the model of fashion and good taste. In his hand was twirled a cane, and in his lapel was the inevitable boutonniere. He had paused to chat with Miss Ross--Duff is married and has a daughter older than Miss Ross--and was engaged in a discussion concerning a new play when Monahan approached. Monahan had on a golf suit which would cause his arrest as a tramp if he wandered from the links.

"Did you come up here to play golf or to pose on the veranda?" demanded the indignant Monahan, grasping Duff by the shoulder and swinging him half way around. "Please go away from him, Miss Ross; he will talk you to death."

Twenty minutes later Duff wandered leisurely out to the first tee, where Monahan had been waiting, glaring every few seconds at the club house, and swearing under his breath. Duff looked even neater than in his street clothes. His shirts, scarfs, trousers, shoes and caps form combinations which are sartorial poems.

Duff smiled complacently during the tongue lashing administered by the irate Monahan. This happens regularly every time they play. One would think that the calm, unruffled Duff would defeat the nervous and impatient Monahan, but nothing of the kind happens. The latter exacts revenge by beating Duff to a frazzle.

I do not mean to infer that the slow or deliberate person will not make a good player, but with deliberation he must have that keen interest which dominates all of his faculties.

Marshall, for instance, is the slowest player I ever saw, and one of the best. It is tiresome to watch him prepare to make a shot. He averages four practice strokes. He has become so addicted to the practice-stroke habit that he makes a series of preliminary manoeuvres before carving a steak, and he raises his glass and sets it down several times before taking a drink. His game is the sublimation of caution. It is the brilliancy of care.

Later in the afternoon I wandered down the old lane which bisects the links and climbed "The Eagle's Nest," a jagged pile of rocks which rise on the southeastern part of the course. When a boy I discovered a way to reach the crest of the higher ledge, fully two hundred feet above the brook which takes its rambling course to the west. At this altitude there is a natural seat, so formed by the rocks that those below cannot see the one who uses this as a sentinel box.

It suited my mood to climb there this afternoon. Lazily smoking a cigar I drank in the pastoral panorama spread out before me. The old Sumner road wound as a dusty-gray ribbon amid fields of grain and corn. Below were the pigmy figures of golfers, grotesque in their insignificance, striding along like abbreviated compasses.

What dwarfs they were compared with their huge playground; what insects they were contrasted to the splendid area within the sweep of the horizon; what microbes they were when the eye wandered from them to the superb vault of the skies!

I heard the lowing of cattle, and saw the Bishop herd coming over a hill from the meadows. The notes of a Scotch air, sung in a clear, mellow baritone came to my ears, and a moment later I saw Bishop's "hired man," Wallace, driving the kine before him. His cap was in his hand, and his jet-black hair fell back from his forehead.

I have no idea what impelled me to do so, but I leaned over the cliff and looked below.

Half-way up the gentler slope of "The Eagle's Nest" I saw the figure of a girl, or a woman. I keep my eyes on her, and as near as I can determine she never once took

hers from Bishop's hired man. Not until he vanished in the woods which surrounds the farmhouse, did she move. Then she turned and slowly picked her way down the rather dangerous path.

It was Miss Olive Lawrence.

ENTRY NO. VI

I PLAY WITH MISS HARDING

I regret that lack of intimacy with the muses prevents me from recording this entry in verse. I have been playing golf with Miss Harding!

Not until this afternoon did I realise that constant association with Marshall, Carter, Chilvers, and other hardened golfers has dulled my finer sensibilities and deadened my appreciation of the wonderful scenic beauties of the Woodvale golf course.

Like the fool bicycle scorcher who tears past beautiful bits of landscape, his eyes fixed on the dusty path spurned by his whirring wheel, or like the goggled maniac who steers an automobile, I now find that I have played hundreds of times over this course without once having seen it.

When I was a boy my foolish parents took me on a tour of the continent, for the reason, I presume, that they did not dare leave me at home. My impression of the colossal splendour beneath the vaulted heights of Saint Peter's was that a certain smooth space on the tiled floor offered unequalled facilities for playing marbles. I marvelled that baseball grounds were not laid out in the noble open spaces surrounding the palaces of Paris, Berlin, and Vienna. The Swiss Alps had a fascination for me by reason of their unsurpassed opportunities for coasting.

It never occurred to me until to-day that nature had any motive in planning Woodvale

other than to provide a sporty golf course. Miss Harding has opened my eyes to the fact that it is one of the most beautiful spots on the face of the earth.

When I told Carter I was to play with Miss Harding, he looked sort of queer for a moment, and then bet me a box of balls I would not make eighty-five. This was the only thing he could think to say. He tried hard to conceal his surprise, but I could see that he was hard hit.

He wins the box of balls, all right. As a matter of fact we did not finish the round, but I did not tell Carter that. I simply grinned happily and told him that he had won.

There is no reason why I should attempt to write an account of this game in this diary. I shall never forget the slightest detail of it as long as I live.

The night is black as a raven's wing, but I am certain that I can start from the first tee and retrace every step made by Miss Harding over the fourteen holes played, and I will admit that it was far from a straight line. I will wager that I can place my hand on every place where her club tore up the turf, and can locate the exact spots where she drove out of bounds.

The day was beautiful, the weather perfect. A few fleecy clouds drifted across a deep sky. The rich green of the slopes blended into the darker shades of the encompassing forests. As a rule, the only thing I can recall after a golf game, so far as weather is concerned, is whether it rained or if a high wind were blowing. It was different today.

I noted that the breeze was just strong enough to ruffle the lace at her throat, and that the blue of her gown matched perfectly with cloud, sky, and the dominating tones of the undulating carpet on which she tread.

I might play with Marshall or Chilvers a thousand times and not know or care if the links were garbed in green or yellow, or if the clouds were pink or Van Dyke brown, but as I said before, the only sentiment aroused by association with these vindictive golf fiends is a wild and unreasoning desire to beat the life out of them at their own game. I dislike to say it, but they have never inspired in me one sentiment of which I am proud.

At my suggestion we decided to start at the third tee. The first one requires a long drive to carry the lane, and on the second it is necessary to negotiate the old graveyard, and I disliked to put Miss Harding to so severe a test on the start.

As I made a tee for her and carefully placed a new white ball on it, I could not help think of the many times I have sneered and laughed at Thomas, who is the only good player in the club who has really seemed to enjoy a game of golf with one of the opposite sex.

I can see now that I have been very unfair to Thomas.

The man who refuses to play golf with a woman, or who even hesitates, and who justifies such conduct on the plea that she cannot play well enough to make the contest an equal one--well, he has none of the finer instincts of a gentleman.

I told Marshall and Chilvers so this evening, and they laughed at me.

Both of these men are married, and both used to play golf with their sweethearts when they were engaged. Once in a great while they now play a round with the alleged partners of their joys and sorrows, but they do it as if it were a penance, and seem immensely relieved when the ordeal is over. It is pitiful to watch these two ladies forced to play together, while their lords and masters indulge in fierce foursomes, waged for the brute love of victory--and incidentally, perhaps for a ball a hole.

If I ever marry I shall play with the habitual golfer only when Mrs. Smith is disinclined to favour me with her society on the links. Chilvers and Marshall say that they made the same resolution--and kept it nearly six months. Let them watch me.

Miss Harding missed the ball entirely the first time she swung at it, and both of us laughed heartily.

Now that I come to think of it, nothing used to infuriate me more than to have to wait on a tee for a woman who was wildly striking at a ball. But one must learn, and it is no disgrace for a lady to miss so small an object as a golf ball.

She hit the ball on the second attempt. It did not go far, it is true, but it went gracefully, describing a parabolic curve considerably to the right of the line of the green.

Then I drove a long, straight ball, and felt just a little bit ashamed of myself. It seemed like taking an unfair advantage of my fair opponent. In fact it seemed a brutal thing to do, but she expressed delight.

"That was splendid, Mr. Smith!" she declared, as my ball stopped rolling, more than two hundred yards away. "I know that my poor little game will bore you to death, but you invited this calamity."

"I only wish that--that I----" and then I stopped in time to keep from saying something foolish.

"Well?" she said, a smile hovering on her lips.

"I only wish that I could drive as far as that every time," I continued, "and--and that you could drive twice as far."

"What an absurd wish!" declared Miss Harding.

It was worse than absurd; it was stupid! Imagine a woman driving a ball four hundred yards! I would never dare marry such a woman, and I came near making some idiotic remark to that effect, but luckily at that moment we came to her ball. I selected the proper club for her, jabbered something about how to play the shot, and thus got safely out of an awkward situation.

At my suggestion we were playing without caddies. There are times when these little terrors take all of the romance out of a situation, and I did not wish to be bothered with them.

On her fourth shot Miss Harding landed her ball in the brook, and it took quite a time to find it. While we were looking for it Boyd and LaHume arrived on the tee, and I motioned them to drive ahead.

I have seen this brook a thousand times. It was my greatest source of amusement and mischief when a boy, but never until this afternoon did I observe its perfect beauty. Heretofore it has been no more nor less than a ribbon of water with weed-lined banks and tall rushes, into which a poor player is likely to drive a ball and lose one or more strokes. It is one of our "natural hazards," and I have thought no more of it than I would of the cushion on a billiard table.

I shall never cross that brook again without thinking of her face as I saw it mirrored in the shadows of the old stone bridge. The reflection was framed with delicate interfacings of water cress, while in the bed of the stream the smooth pebbles gleamed like pearls. The pointed reeds nodded and waved in the gentle breeze.

Now that I think of it, I have cursed those reeds many, many times while hunting for a lost ball.

"Is it not beautiful?" I exclaimed to Miss Harding.

"That drive of Mr. Boyd's?" she asked in reply. Boyd had made a ripper, which went sailing over our heads. "It was a lovely drive! He has beaten you by several yards."

"I meant the brook," I said.

"The brook?" she exclaimed. "I am surprised, Mr. Smith! I had no idea that a confirmed golfer could find beauty in anything outside of a drive, brassie, approach or putt."

"You malign us, Miss Harding," I declared, looking first in her eyes and then in her mirrored image in the water. "From where I stand that brook is the most lovely thing in the world, except--except----"

"Mr. LaHume has put his ball square on the green on his second shot!" interrupted Miss Harding, clapping her hands in excitement.

I do not know whether she knew what I was going to say or not. I wish I had the nerve to finish some of the fine speeches and compliments I plan and begin, but as a rule I end them without a climax.

We found the ball and I dropped it a few yards back of the brook. She promptly drove it into the brook a second time, and what became of it will always remain a mystery to me. It did not go more than fifteen feet, and we looked and looked but could not find it, so I smiled and dropped another one, and this time she made a really good shot.

Counting all of the strokes and penalties it took Miss Harding fifteen to make that hole, the bogey for which is four, but I assured her that I have known men to do worse, and I believe the statement a fact, though I cannot recall at this moment who did it in such woeful figures.

Miss Harding insisted in trying to drive over the pond on the fourth hole, and said she would gladly pay for all the balls that went into it, but of course I would not listen to that. The pond is very shallow at this season of the year, and in fact is a mud hole in most places, and it is therefore impossible to recover a ball which fails to carry less than eighty yards.

She barely touched the ball on her first attempt, and I got it after wading in the mud to my shoe tops. Then she hit it nicely, but it failed to carry the pond by a few yards, and disappeared in the ooze.

"I thought I could do it, but I give it up," she said, and I could see that she was disappointed.

"Try it again," I insisted, teeing up a new one. "Keep your eye on the ball when your club comes down, and don't press."

She made a brave effort, but hit the ball a trifle on top. It struck the water, ricocheted and eventually poised itself on a mud bank. I recall how white it looked against the black slime with lily pads in the background, but I saw at a glance that it would remain there, so far as we were concerned.

Against her protest I teed another ball, but she went under it and it met the fate of its predecessors. It took all my eloquence to induce her to make the five attempts which followed, and then I made the discovery that I had brought only eight new balls with me. So I excused myself and went back to the club house and bought a box of a dozen, but nothing would change her determination not to try it again.

I am firmly convinced that with a little luck she could have done it, but it was the first time Miss Harding had played this course, and that makes lots of difference.

Of the various incidents in this most delightful game nothing gave me more keen enjoyment than when Miss Harding played Carter's ball. It was by mistake, of course. Nature has implanted in woman an instinct which leads her to play any ball rather than her own. The ball thus selected is generally without a blemish, and it has been ordained that a weak little creature can with one stroke cut that sphere in halves.

That is what happened to Carter's ball when Miss Harding played it by mistake, and I never laughed more heartily. Carter smiled and bowed and pretended to be amused, but I knew he was not.

We rested on top of the hill after this exploit and talked of the rare view and of other topics which had nothing whatever to do with golf. Never before have I rested during a game, and I did not think it possible. I have been on that hill innumerable times, but it never occurred to me to take more than a passing glance at the inspiring vista which spreads away to the north and west.

We talked of poetry and of art. Think of sitting with a golf club in your hand, resting a few rods from a tee where a clean shot will carry the railway tracks a hundred feet below and land your ball on a green two hundred and eighty yards from the tee--it is one of the finest holes in the country--think of idling an hour away on the most perfect golf afternoon you ever saw, and repeating line after line of verse descriptive of "meadows green and sylvan shades," and all that sort of thing!

We did that! I would not believe it, but I actually felt sorry for the chaps who went past us, their minds absorbed in the mere struggle to see which would take the fewer numbers of strokes in putting golf balls in certain round holes. Honestly I pitied them.

And they envied me. I could see that. The arrival of Miss Harding has created a sensation, and it was no small honour to play the first game with her. Of course Marshall, Chilvers, Pepper and other married men hardly noticed me, but Thomas, Boyd, Roberts and such young gallants smiled, bowed and looked longingly in my direction.

It took us more than five hours to play twelve holes, and I have played twice around in less than that. I have not the slightest idea what my score is, and that is something which never before happened to me. Carter wins a dozen balls, and he can have them, or a dozen dozen for all I care.

Miss Harding has promised to play with me again.

ENTRY NO. VII

TWO BOYS FROM BUCKFIELD

When Harding was in the city he purchased a huge golf bag, the most wonderful assortment of clubs imaginable, also two golf suits and a bewildering array of shirts, caps, scarfs, shoes and other articles that some dealers assured him were necessary for the proper playing of the game.



"If I have got to play this fool game, and I suppose there is no way I can get out of it," he said to me, looking down disdainfully at his knickerbockered legs and taking an extra hitch on his new leather belt, "I may as well have the regulation uniform. How do I look?"

I told him the suit was very becoming. He was a sight! On his huge, bushy head was a Scotch cap, and it is certain that no clan stands sponsor for that bewildering plaid. The silk shirt was a beauty, but it did not harmonise with the burning red of his coat, with its cuffs and collar of vivid green.

His trousers were of another plaid, but I should say that his stockings were the dominating feature of his make-up. They were of green and gray, the stripes running around instead of up and down, the effect being, of course, to emphasize the appearance of stoutness. When you pull a thick stocking or legging over an eighteen-inch calf you have done something which compels even those who are near-sighted and blasé to sit up and give attention.

Harding's feet are of generous proportions, and his tan shoes with their thick, broad soles armed with big spikes to keep him from slipping looked most impressive.

He was the personification of newness. The leather of his bag was flawless, and the grips of his clubs were new and glossy. The steel and nickel of his iron clubs shone without one flaw to dim their lustre. In the pocket of his bag were a dozen new balls, so white and gleaming that it seemed a shame to use them. I could see that the art collection of balls being made by Miss Dangerfield would take on a boom from the advent of Harding.

"Tell you what I want to do, Smith," said Harding, as we stood on the veranda of the club house, early this forenoon. "I want to find some place where I can soak a ball as far as I can and not have it stopped by a hill or a brook, or something like that. I haven't been over this place yet, but isn't there some smooth, level place where a ball would naturally roll a quarter of a mile or so if you hit it good and hard?"

"The eighteenth hole is six hundred and thirty-two yards--one of the longest in the country," I said, "and it is smooth as a barn floor after you carry the railroad tracks. That is a long carry, and most players go short and take the tracks on their second shot."

"Six hundred odd yards," he mused. "Let's see; over a third of a mile, eh?"

I said that it was, and a par hole in six.

"Anybody ever drive it yet?" he asked.

"Drive it?" I repeated, laughing. "Well, I should say not! I have reached the green in three only twice in all the times I have played it, and am well satisfied to be there in four."

"That proves nothing to me," he said, looking me over, "but you're a pretty husky-appearing chap at that. You're nearly six feet, aren't you, Smith?"

"A quarter of an inch more than six feet in my stockings," I said.

"And how much do you weigh?"

"One hundred and eighty-five."

"You'd ought to be able to drive a ball farther than you do," he said, with the air of one who had mastered the game in all its details. There is not a man in the club who can consistently out-drive me, and I'll wager that Kirkaldy himself cannot average ten yards more than I do, but what was the use of arguing with Harding?

It was easy to see that this magnate actually believed that his first stroke at a golf ball was no accident, and was confident that with a little practice he could far surpass that terrific drive of two hundred and seventy yards. But though I well knew what was coming to him I held my peace.

I asked Kirkaldy if he had ever known of a happening similar to Harding's now famous drive. He said he could not recall when a duffer had reached so great a distance, but it was not unusual for a husky novice to drive a few good balls before he began to attempt an improvement of a natural, but of course crude, stroke.

"But," I asked Kirkaldy, "how did Harding manage to drive it so far?"

"Strength and luck, mon," said our Scotch professional, "the more luck. It war th' same as when ye won a match with me by makin' th' last three holes in less than bogey. Luck, mon, is yer truest friend."

I think Kirkaldy is right.

"I never like to take up a thing unless it is difficult," said Harding, as we started for the eighteenth tee. "I like to do the things other men say cannot be done, and without blowing my own horn I have done a few of them. I am fond of work, but when I play I

play with all my might. The boy who is not a good player will never make a good worker. You take a boy who is playing baseball, for instance. I can watch a game among youngsters and pick out those who are likely to win out later on in life."

"How?" I interrupted.

"By the way they go at it. The one who covers the most ground on a ball field will cover the most ground later on in whatever he undertakes. The one who plays to win, who takes chances even at the risk of making errors is the coming man. The boy who sits down in the out-field, on the theory that a ball is not likely to come in his direction, will be poor all his life. The boy who plays an unimportant position as if his very existence depended upon it will get along all right, and don't you forget it. But this golf game is so simple that it does not call on a man to let himself out. Billiards is my game. Billiards is a game of endless possibilities, and no matter how well a man plays there is always room for improvement."

That made me mad, and I resented this assertion the more for the reason that I once held the same views as he then expressed. I went right at him.

"When you have played as many games of golf as you have of billiards," I said, and I play a fair billiard game myself, "you will not mention them in the same breath. Let me assure you, Mr. Harding, that golf is the most difficult game in the world, and you have only the slightest conception of what you must master before you can play more than an indifferent sort of a game."

He smiled indulgently.

"What is there hard about it?" he demanded. "In billiards, for instance, you--"

"You play billiards on a table which is not more than five feet by ten," I broke in, "and you play golf on a table which may cover two hundred acres of hills, woods, marshes, ponds, brooks, and meadows. You play billiards in a room which is always at about the same temperature, and where there is not a breath of air stirring. You play golf out-of-doors, where it may be one hundred in the shade or far below freezing; under conditions of perfect calm, or with winds ranging all the way from a zephyr to gales from every point of the compass."

"There is something in that," he admitted, "but you need not get mad about it, Smith."

"Your billiard table is always the same," I continued. "It consists of the cloth and four cushions, and they are smooth as art can make them. Your golf course is never the same on any two days, and would not be if you played through all eternity. Sometimes the grass in a certain place is long, and sometimes it is short; sometimes it is thick, and again it is thin; sometimes the ground is hard from lack of rain, and again it is soft and spongy from an excess of rain. There are millions of variations in these conditions, and every one of them must be considered in making a perfect shot."

"Yes, I suppose that is so," he admitted, and I could see I had started him thinking.

"There are days when the air is light," I went on, "and when a certain stroke will send the ball where you wish it to go. There are other days when the air is heavy, and when a hit ball seems to have no life in it. You must allow for the force and direction of every slant of wind. There are conditions of atmosphere when objects seem near, and others when they seem far away, and you must take this into account."

He was silent, and I went on.

"On a billiard table your ball is always within easy reach. You stand on a level floor and play on a level table. In golf your ball never lands in the same place twice. It may be above you, or below you. It may lie in any one of ten million separate conformations of ground, and for each you must exercise judgment. Your clubs change in weight as you clean them; no two golf balls have the same degree of elasticity when new, and as you use them it decreases. But more than all else, you are not the same man physically or mentally on any two days. A slight increase in weight, the wearing of an extra garment, the congestion of a muscle or the stiffening of a chord may be sufficient to throw you off your stroke and seriously impair your game."

"Nonsense; I don't believe it," he declared. "When I once find out how to make a certain shot I will keep right on improving until I have it perfect."

"If that were possible golf would lose its charm," I said. "A man will go on making a certain shot with almost perfect accuracy for months, and all at once lose the knack of it, and not be able to recover it for months, and perhaps never. In order to hit a golf ball accurately there are scores of muscles which must act in perfect accord, and

the several parts of the body must maintain certain positions during the various parts of the stroke. If the shoulder drops the quarter of an inch, if the heel rises too soon by the minutest fraction of a second, if either hand grasping the club turns in any degree the stroke is ruined. You will hit the ball, but it will not go the distance or the direction required."

"Must be a mighty hard game, from all that you say," he laughed, grimly. "Guess I'd better go back and not try it, but I notice that there was nothing the matter with the position of my muscles, cords, hands and the rest of my anatomy the other day when I whacked that ball out of sight. And I can do it again, Smith, and don't you forget it."

I preferred to await the arbitrament of events so far as that boast was concerned.

We had arrived at the eighteenth tee, and he looked over the field with much satisfaction. The railroad embankment is about one hundred and fifty yards from the tee, and few try to carry it. The old post road runs parallel to the line of this hole, and forms the western boundary of the Woodvale links. There is no bunker save the railroad bank for the entire distance, and it is an ideal hole for the golf "slugger."

"Where is the green?" asked Harding, standing on the elevated tee. I pointed in the line of the old church belfry, and after a long look he declared that he could see the white flag floating from the standard.

"Nobody ever drove it, you say?" he observed, throwing his shoulders back.

"Of course not," I laughed, and added, "and never will."

"Don't be too sure about that," he said, piling a mound of sand. "It's nothing more than a 'putt,' as you call it, to bat a ball over that railroad."

"You talk about driving six hundred yards to that green," I said, annoyed at his ignorant nerve, "I will bet you a box of cigars that you do not carry that railroad track in a month."

"Don't be foolish, Smith."

"Do you wish to bet?"

"Of course I do," he replied, teeing a ball, "and we'll get action on it in about ten seconds. Just keep your eye on this ball!"

Disdaining to take a practice stroke, he swung viciously at it. He must have caught it on the toe of his club, for it sliced to the right in a low and sweeping curve.

As I followed its flight I saw a farm wagon in the road. The driver had stopped his team, and was standing up watching Harding. I recognized Farmer Bishop, and noted that his sallow face was distorted in a disdainful grin, which froze on his lips when he saw the ball curving toward him.

It is difficult for an experienced golfer to dodge a sliced drive, even when he has a chance to run to one side or the other, but all that Bishop could do was to duck, which he did, with the result that the ball hit his left temple. He half fell and half jumped to the ground, and was not so badly hurt as to prevent his being the maddest agriculturist I have seen in many years.

He danced up and down at the edge of the road, his hand to his head, warm, loud words flowing in a torrent from his mouth.

Harding dropped his club and we both ran toward the injured man. Harding was the first to reach the fence, but he did not climb over.

"Did it hit you?" he asked Bishop.

The farmer took one more hop and then turned and faced the railroad magnate. There was a lump over his eye bigger than a hen's egg, and on it I could see the bramble marks of the ball. It was a moment before his rage permitted utterance. He spit out a mouthful of tobacco so as not to be handicapped.

"Did you hit me; you dod-gasted old poppinjay of a fat dude!" he exclaimed, shaking a brawny, freckled fist at Harding. "Did you hit me; you flabby old chromo! Do you suppose I fall out of my wagon and dance up and down this road for exercise; you old boiled lobster?"

"I am very sorry, sir," said Harding, amusement and growing anger struggling for mastery. "I wasn't shooting in this direction. Something happened to my ball; what do you call it, Smith?"

"You sliced it," I said.

"That's it; I sliced it," declared Harding, as if that were more or less of a valid excuse.

"You come over that fence an' I'll slice you!" roared Bishop, taking a step forward. "Things have come to a fine pass in this country if an honest farmer can't take his milk to town without riskin' bein' murdered by plutocrats with 'sliced balls' and all that blankety-blank tommyrot. Climb over on this side of the fence an' I'll lick seven kinds of stuffin' out of you in erbout a minute."

"Keep your shirt on!" retorted Harding, "you won't lick nobody."

He looked curiously at the maddened farmer.

"Your name is Bishop, isn't it?" he asked, and I wondered how he happened to know.

"Yes, my name's Bishop," was the sullen and defiant answer.

"Jim Bishop?"

"Yes; Jim Bishop."

Harding grinned good-naturedly. "Don't you know who I am?" he asked.

"No, I don't, and I don't give a damn!" replied Bishop, looking at him more closely, I thought.

"Did you know a young fellow named Harding when you were a boy?" asked Harding.

"Bob Harding?"

"Yes, Bob Harding!"

"Do you mean to tell me that you're the Bob Harding who used to live on a farm near Buckfield, Maine?" asked Bishop, the anger dying from his voice.

"That's what I am!" declared the millionaire, as Bishop came toward him, a curious smile on his tanned face. "How are you, Jim?"

"Well; I'll be jiggered! How are you, Bob?" and they shook hands across the fence. For a moment neither spoke.

"It's thirty years or more since I've seen you," said Harding. "When did you move to this country?"

"Over twenty-five years ago," said Bishop. "And what have you been doing with yourself all these years? I surely hope you've found something better to do than play this here fool game an' knock people's heads off."

He tenderly rubbed the lump on his forehead.

"I just took this game up," said Harding rather sheepishly. "I've been building railroads."

"Are you Robert L. Harding, the railroad king that the papers talk so much about?" demanded Bishop.

"I guess I'm the fellow," admitted Harding.

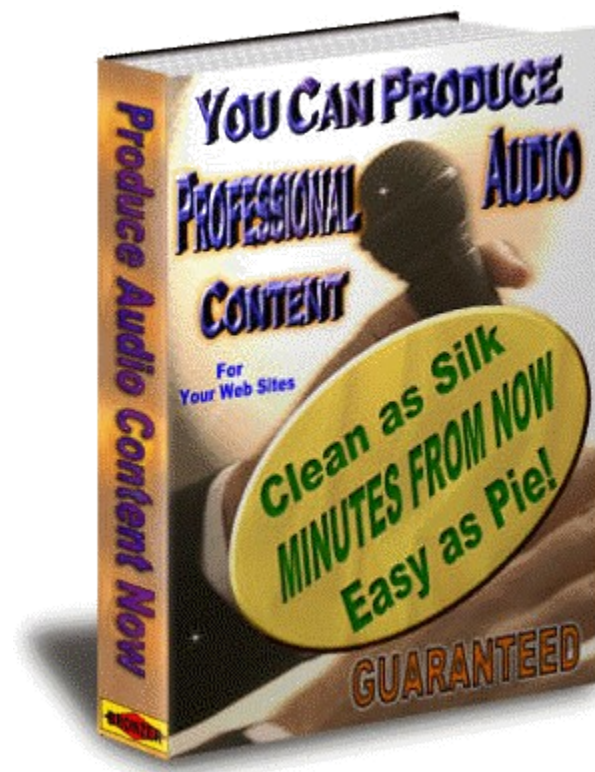
"Well; I never would have believed it!" gasped Bishop, and then they shook hands again.

They sat on a rock and talked about Buckfield and their boyhood days for an hour. It seems that they were born and raised on adjoining farms, and were chums until Harding's father died, at which time Harding went West and found his fortune.

Not until the horses became restless and started to go home did Bishop note the passing of time. He cordially invited Harding and his daughter to come and call on him, and Harding did not hesitate in accepting the invitation.

Now that I think of it, none of us gave a thought to that ball, and I suppose it is out in the road yet. Harding said that was all the golf he wished that day, and so we went back to the club house.

"Talk about driving a ball six hundred yards, Smith," he said, as we came to the eighteenth tee. "I knocked that ball so far that I hit a boy in Maine, and that's hundreds of miles from here."



ENTRY NO. VIII

DOWNFALL OF MR. HARDING

I do not know whether to be annoyed or amused over the result of my second golf game with Miss Harding. It was not in the least like my anticipations.

Our first game was so romantic. It was as if the kindly skies had raised a dome over earth's most favoured spot and reserved it for our use. It was different to-day.

I presume it is necessary that beautiful maidens shall have fathers. I raise no doubt that Mr. Harding is a wonderful financier and railroad genius, and it is likely he is entitled to a vacation and to that relaxation which comes from taking exercise, but this does not justify him in--well, in "butting in" on our game. I don't use slang as a rule, but no other term so accurately describes the conduct of that gentleman this afternoon.

As for Carter--I have no words to express what I think of Carter.

If I had a daughter nineteen years old it would occur to me that she might prefer to play golf with a young gentleman somewhere near her own age rather than with me, especially if that young gentleman were a good golfer, and possessed of wealth, prospects, and honourable ambitions. But Mr. Harding treats her as if she were a school miss in short dresses. He persists in calling her "Kid," and only rarely does he address her by the beautiful name of Grace.

When Miss Harding started from the club house her father was on the lawn not many yards away engaged in the interesting but expensive experiment of trying to drive balls across the lake. He was buying new balls by the box--they cost \$5.50 a box--with the joyous abandon of a pampered boy purchasing fire-crackers on the Fourth of July.

All he asks of a ball is "one crack at it," and the caddies were reaping a harvest. He had not made one decent drive, and was surprised and angry.

As luck would have it he turned and saw us as we were starting for the first tee. He had laid aside that flaming red-and-green coat, and was in his shirt sleeves. His face was crimson from exertion, and his hair wet with perspiration.

"Where are you going?" he called.

"We're going to play a round," I answered, with a sinking heart.

"Good; I'll go with you," he returned. "Chuck the rest of those balls into that sack," he said to one of his caddies, "and follow me."

What could I do but say we would be delighted to have him join us? We were waiting for him, when who should come from the club house but Carter.

"Hello there, Carter!" shouted Harding. "Come on and play with us! This is my first real game, and we'll make it a foursome, or whatever you call it. What d'ye say?"

"That's fine!" declared Carter.

I happen to know that he had already made up a game with Marshall, Boyd, and Chilvers, but he did not hesitate to abandon them for his long-coveted chance to play with Miss Harding.

"We'll have a great game," asserted Mr. Harding mopping his brow. "How shall we divide up? I suppose you're the best player, Carter, and Smith comes next, but I can beat the Kid, here," patting Miss Harding on the shoulder.

"I'll bet you cannot," I declared, angry that he should class Carter above me.

"Bet I cannot beat my Grace?" he exclaimed. I told him that such was my opinion.

"Of course I can beat you, papa," laughed Miss Harding. "You have never played, and know nothing of the game. I can beat you easily."

"Talk of the insolence and ingratitude of children!" he gasped. "Kid, I'm astonished at you! I'll teach both of you a lesson. What do you want to bet, Smith?"

I suggested that a box of balls would suit me as a bet.

"Box of monkeys!" exclaimed Harding. "I thought you were a sport, Smith! A box of balls don't last me as long as a box of cigarettes does Carter. Tell you what I'll do. We'll all keep track of our shots, and for every one I beat her you pay me a box of balls, and for every one she beats me I pay you a box of balls. How does that strike you?"

"Take him up, Mr. Smith," said Miss Harding, a smile on her lips and a meaning glance in her eyes. I would not have hesitated had I known it would have cost me every dollar in the world.

"You are on, Mr. Harding," I said.

"We'll teach you a good lesson, Papa Harding," she declared, with a confidence which surprised me. "You have never seen me play."

He roared with laughter. "Talk about David and Goliath!" he exclaimed. "Tell you what I'll do, Kid. I'll make you a small bet on the side. You remember that sixty horse-power buzz wagon we were looking at in the city the other day?"



"The one in red that I admired so much?" asked Miss Harding.

"Yes, the one you tried to soft soap me into buying. Tell you what I'll do. If you beat me I'll buy that machine for you, and if I beat you I get a new hat which you pay for out of your pin money."

"It's a shame to take advantage of you, papa, dear," she hesitated, "but I want that machine awfully, and I'll make the wager."

"If you never get it until you beat me at this shinny game you will wait a long time," he declared. "Who shoots first?"

"Miss Harding and I will be partners," suggested Carter, before I could get the words out of my mouth.

"Since I am interested in Miss Harding's play to the extent of a box of balls a stroke, I claim the right to act as her partner and adviser," I said, looking hard at Carter.

"Mr. Smith and I will be partners," said Miss Harding, and it was the happiest moment of my life.

"I don't care who are partners," said Harding, stepping up to the tee. "I'll shoot first, and you keep your eye on your Uncle Dudley!"

He piled up a hill of sand, gripped his club like grim death, drew back, swung with all his might--and missed the ball by three inches.



"One stroke!" laughed Miss Harding.

"That don't count!" he declared. "I didn't hit the blamed thing at all! Look at it! It's just where I fixed it a minute ago. Don't cheat, Kid!"

"A missed ball counts a stroke," laughed Carter.



"Are you sure that's the rule?"

We all assured him there was not the slightest doubt of it.

"All that I can say is that it's a fool rule," he protested, "but at that, one missed swipe cuts little figure with me. Here goes for number two!"

"Don't press!" cautioned Carter.

"I'll press all I darned please. Keep your eyes on this one!"

He grazed the ball enough to make it roll not more than twenty feet into a clump of tall grass. He looked blankly at it, but did not say a word. Then he took a jack-knife from his pocket and cut two notches in the shaft of his club.

Carter drove out a good one, and I teed a ball for Miss Harding. The lane is about a hundred yards away, and I thought of advising her to play short, but on reflection determined not to embarrass her by suggestions so early in the game.

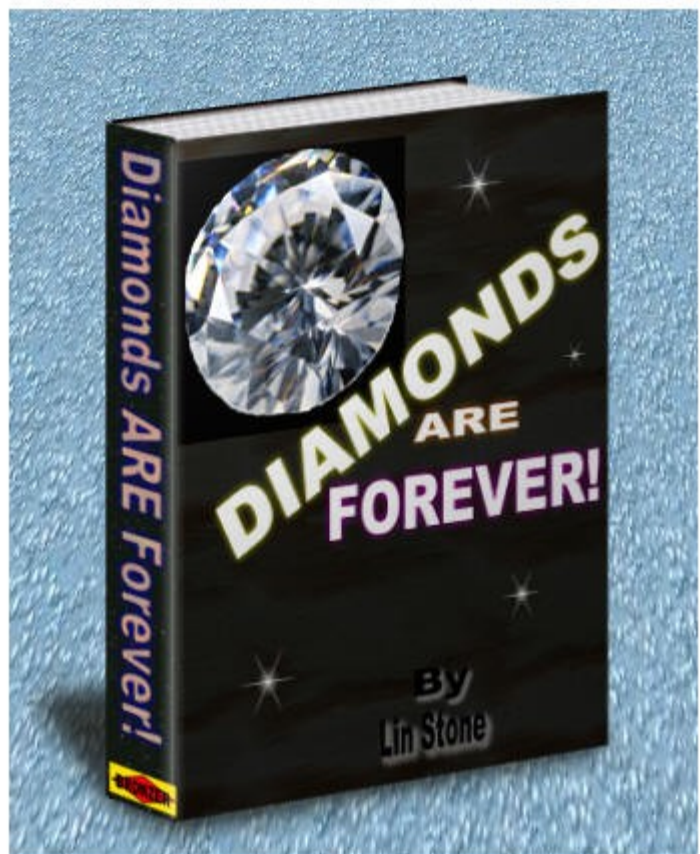
The moment she took her stance and grasped her club I noted a difference in her style of play as compared with that of the preceding day. Her club head came back with a free, even curve, and on the return she caught the ball with a good though not perfect follow through. The ball carried straight and true over the lane, and did not stop rolling until it had passed the 130-yard mark. It was a nice clean drive, and I smiled my approval.

"Good work, Kid," grinned Harding, but he did not seem the least dismayed. I should not care to play poker with him. I lined out a beauty, and then Harding returned to the attack.

It took two strokes to get his ball out of the grass. On his fifth shot the ball had a good lie about ten yards from the lane fence. He smashed at it with a brassie, but drove too low. The ball hit a fence post and bounded back fully seventy-five yards. In five strokes he had not gained a foot. After a combination of weird and wonderful shots he reached the green in twelve.

Harding's putting was a revelation in how not to drop a ball in a cup. He went back and forth over the hole like a shuttle. This performance added six to his score, and he holed out in nineteen. He was fighting mad, but did not say a word. While the rest of us were holing out he sullenly added seventeen notches to his club.

I was astonished and pleased at the reversal in form shown by Miss Harding. Two iron shots laid her ball on the green, her approach was a little weak, and she missed an easy two-foot putt, but she made the hole in seven, which is not at all bad for a woman. Carter and I both got fours.



When Harding finally got his ball out of the old graveyard in playing the second hole there was a dispute as to how many strokes he had taken. I counted twelve, but he claimed only nine, and we let him have his own way about it. I did not dare to dispute with him, fearing that he might have a stroke of apoplexy. He marked eleven new notches on his club shaft for this hole.

He made a fair drive over the marsh on his third hole, flubbed his second and third shots, but his fourth was a screaming brassie which landed him on the green within two inches of the cup. It was one of those freak shots which a man makes once a season, but Harding took vast credit for it and was the happiest person on the links over his bogey five for this long hole.

Miss Harding was playing like a veteran. This hole is 355 yards from the tee, but she was well on the green on her third, and holed out in six. Carter did the same, but I got a five and saved the hole for our side.

I do not know how to account for Miss Harding's improved playing. It was not in the least like that of the day when we were alone. For the entire eighteen holes she played steady, consistent golf. It was not brilliant, but it was a creditable exhibition for a woman. She kept on the course, missed only two drives, and rarely failed to get distance and direction.

Not until we had played half-way around and Harding was hopelessly behind did he give voice to his amazement.

"This is the time you have got the old man down and out, Kid," he said, after she had made the ninth hole in four to his fourteen. "I'll admit that there is a trick about this game that I'm not on to, but you just wait; you just wait. I seem to hit 'em all right, but confound 'em, they don't go right. I don't understand it. I'd have bet a million dollars against a perfecto cigar that I could drive a ball farther than a 125-pound girl, even if she is my daughter."

"We will call our bet off, Mr. Harding," I suggested, satisfied that we had tumbled him from the pedestal reared by his conceit.

"We'll call nothing off," he promptly declared. "Soak it to me as hard as you can; I'll get even with all of you before the season's over."

No language can describe the game played by the railway magnate. His miserable playing was supplemented by worse luck. A predatory cow swallowed his ball. He drove another one into the crotch of a tree, hit Carter in the shin, broke a window in the club house, tore his trousers, sprained his thumb, and poisoned his hands with ivy while searching for a lost ball. He conversed much with himself when Miss Harding was not near.

The nicks in his club by which he kept score became so numerous, and they so weakened the shaft, that he finally broke it; also one of the commandments.

The story of his calamities and of his undoing is feebly indicated by his score, which was as follows:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out--	19	11	5	7	12	9	8	16	14--	101	In---	8	6	10	5
7	7	11	5	12--	71	---	Total							--	172									

Miss Harding made it in 116, and with a reasonable amount of luck I am sure she would have done much better. I played a rattling good game, completing the round in 80, which is the best score I have made this season.

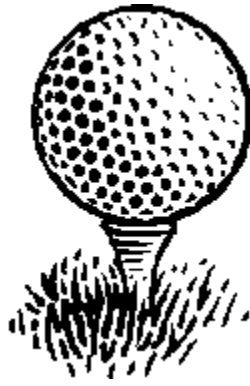
I put it all over Carter, who had made me a side bet of the dinners for the four of us that his individual score would be better than mine.

Miss Harding won an automobile which will cost not less than \$15,000; I won fifty-six dozen golf balls, enough to last me two years; Carter lost a dinner which I thoroughly enjoyed, and Mr. Harding lost his temper, but I will give him credit for finding it the moment the game was over.

He laughed as if it were the greatest joke in the world.

"You threw me down, Kid," he said to Miss Harding, "but I'll forgive you. You get the buzz wagon and Smith gets a cartload of balls, but I'll tell you one thing, and that is this: I'm going to learn how to hit one of those blamed balls in the nose every time I swipe at it, even if I have to resign the presidency of the R.G. & K. railroad."

I can see that the golf microbe has marked him for a shining victim.



ENTRY NO. IX

MR. SMITH GETS BUSY

I have had to neglect my golf and attend to business. For nearly a week I have not seen Miss Harding. And all on account of that miserable N.O. & G. stock.

Early in the week it dropped to more than ten points below the figure at which I purchased it. This meant a loss of \$20,000.

Tuesday morning I called on my broker and he informed me that if N.O. & G. dropped two more points he would have to call on me for margins. There were rumours, he said, that it would pass its next dividend, or at least reduce it. Then I got busy.

I called on Jones, the kind friend who steered me against this investment. Jones informed me that certain powerful banking interests were raiding the stock. He could not identify them, and I saw that he knew nothing about it.

"We are the lambs, Smith," he sadly said. "I'm in for a thousand shares myself."

"They have not an ounce of my fleece yet," I declared, and turned and left him.

I served two years on Wall Street under my father, and there was no streak of mutton in him. It made me furious to think that I should be made to "hold the bag" for a lot of unscrupulous tricksters.

I set about ascertaining the exact status of the business of the N.O. & G. In my search for information I was thwarted again and again, but I do not think it was entirely luck which led me to solve the mystery to my personal satisfaction. I employed detectives to assist me, and in four days had the information on which to act.

It is as neat a conspiracy as ever was hatched by financial brigands, but I think I know every tree behind which they are hid. It is probable that they are within the pale of the written law, but one would have the same right to operate in gold bricks or green goods.

It may be that the action I have taken will spell my financial ruin, but I propose to ascertain if a gentleman cannot take a modest flyer in Wall Street without being marked as "a come-on," which is the term used by those who rig the market.

If they get me it will be not for \$20,000 but for \$2,000,000. I propose to make the fight of my life. I wonder what Miss Harding would think if she knew I were engaged in a deal of this magnitude?

On Thursday I instructed my business agents to convert certain negotiable assets into cash, and to arrange for an extension of my credit with the banks. I now propose to follow N.O. & G. to the bottom--if there be one--and if not I shall drop with my money into the fathomless void of bankruptcy.

I called on my broker.

"I wish to get out," I said to him. "I will take my losses. This has been an expensive experience to me."

"I do not imagine, Mr. Smith," he said, "that the loss of \$23,000 will seriously cripple you or disturb your serenity."

I made a gesture of despair.

"If that were all I would not give it a thought," I said. He looked at me curiously.

"I hope that you are not long on this stock to any great extent," he said.

"I should have said nothing about it," I returned, looking as distressed as possible. "Please make no inference from my remark, and keep this transaction entirely an office secret."

"It is not necessary to caution me," he quickly said.

The financial papers that evening recorded a rumour to the effect that "The son of a late well-known banker and operator is said to be heavily long on N.O. & G., and the slump in that stock during the closing hours was probably due to his frantic efforts to close out an account estimated at 20,000 shares."

I wonder where that rumour originated. This is the way secrets are kept in Wall Street.

Prior to this I had commissioned Morse & Davis, brokers in whom I have implicit confidence, to purchase 5,000 shares of the stock at or below 75. I obtained 79 for my original investment, and its sale combined with the circulation of the rumour before mentioned precipitated a flurry in N.O. & G. which sent it as low as 74 and a fraction.

Before the market closed I had my five thousand shares.

Friday morning selling orders poured in from frightened small holders, and when their demands had been satisfied the "syndicated conspirators" put the screws on just as I expected. They also circulated an alleged authorised interview with an official of the N.O. & G. forecasting the passing of the regular semi-annual dividend.

Had I not been acquainted with the plans of these quotation wreckers I should have been seriously alarmed.

When the tape recorded a sale at 70 I placed an order with Morse & Davis for 10,000 shares, and they picked it up in small lots at an average of 69. It rose slightly on Saturday, and I did nothing with it.

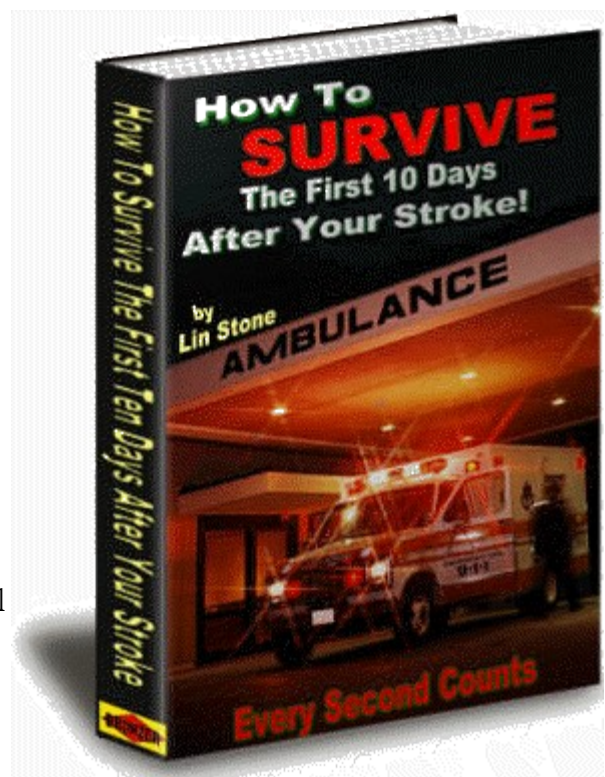
I have put up in margins \$375,000, sufficient to protect me against a drop of twenty-five points. I stand to lose \$1,975,000, and know where I can place my hands on the money. I anticipate that the stock will go much lower, and have planned accordingly. My share of my lamented father's estate is worth fully two and a half millions, and it is in such shape that I can speedily convert it into cash. If these thieves can get it they are welcome to it, but they will know that they have been in a fight.

The transition from the healthy quiet of Woodvale to the feverish furore of Wall Street was startling. At times as I stood by the ticker I could hardly persuade myself that it was not a dream, from which I should awake to stroll with Miss Harding across the brooks and green meadows we both love so well.

My prolonged absence from the links created some comment, so I am told, but no questions were asked and I volunteered no information. I have arranged matters so that it will not be necessary to spend much of my time in the city, unless something unexpected develops.

I have lost no sleep, but my golf this afternoon was disappointing.

I required eighty-nine for the round and lost seven golf balls to Chilvers and Boyd. This will never do!



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR.--From the foregoing it appears that Mr. Smith's stock transactions up to this date have involved a net loss of about \$51,000, with a probability of a continuance of the decline during the coming week. Under these circumstances it would seem that he attaches undue importance to the loss of seven golf balls, which I am informed, may be purchased at the standard price of fifty cents apiece. Possibly this criticism may be impeached by those familiar with the ethics and peculiarities of golf, a game of which my knowledge is purely academic.]

On the table in front of me stands the finest golf trophy which ever delighted the eye of a devotee of the game. It is the bronze figure of a player whose mashie is in the position of that valuable iron club at the end of a short approach. It is the work of a French sculptor, and in design and execution it is nothing short of an inspiration. The position of the feet, body, arms, and shoulders, the expression of the face and eyes; all these details are perfect.

The figure is twenty-four inches in height and is mounted on an ebony pedestal.

Mr. Harding has given this magnificent bronze to the club, and it is in my keeping, as chairman of the Greens Committee. It will be presented to the winner of this year's championship of Woodvale by Miss Grace Harding, and I have posted an announcement of the conditions of the competition. It is open to all members, sixteen best scores to qualify, and then match play of eighteen holes, with thirty-six for the finals. The tournament starts a week from Tuesday.

Between watching Wall Street and getting in shape for this competition I am likely to have a busy week.

Mr. Harding called me into his apartments yesterday evening, displayed this gem of a bronze, and told me how he came to acquire it.

"It was the Kid's suggestion, but I endorsed it in a minute," he said, passing a box of cigars. "We were prowling around the jewelry haunts, Grace and I, seeing what she could flim-flam me into buying for her, when we ran across this thing. She thought it was great. I looked it over and saw that this bronze gentleman does not hold his club the way I do, and was in favour of letting him wait for another owner. Then she suggested that it would be a great scheme to buy it and give it to the club. I thought it over a minute and decided that it might be a good idea, and so I bought it, and here it is. Now you boys will have to scrap it out among yourselves, and may the best one win."

"This is the finest trophy ever offered to the club," I said, "and on behalf of the members I wish to thank you as donor and Miss Harding as the instigator."

"I'll create enough trouble around here to work out any indebtedness you fellows owe me for that gee-gaw," he laughed. "I've had an awful time since you have been down town, Smith. I reckon I've ploughed up as much turf as Jim Bishop did all last spring. Speaking of Bishop, did you know we're invited over to his place Monday evening?"

"I had not heard of it," I said.

"Well, we are," he said. "There's going to be great doings day after to-morrow night. Bishop's new red barn is finished, and a bunch of us are going over to dinner and then participate in the dance. Let's go down stairs and hunt up Grace and Carter and constitute the four of us a committee on arrangements and invitation. Grace talked to Bishop more than I did and she knows all about it."

We found Miss Harding, Miss Lawrence, LaHume, and Carter on the veranda, and decided to enlarge the committee to six. Miss Harding said Mr. Bishop intimated he should expect about a dozen of us.

"Well, let's see," figured Mr. Harding, and I felt in my bones he would make a mess of it. "Get out your pencil, Smith, and take us down as I give the names. There's Ma Harding and me, that's two; there's Carter and Grace makes four; LaHume and his sweetheart makes six; then there's----"

"Mr. LaHume and whom?" interrupted Miss Lawrence, her cheeks red and her eyes snapping fire. The grin on LaHume's face died out.

"Why, LaHume and----"

"You've gone far enough," laughed Miss Harding. "Let me help you out, papa. We will select the gentlemen first. Please take down this list, Mr. Smith. Suppose we name Mr. LaHume, Mr. Carter, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Chilvers, Mr. Smith, and Papa Harding. Then there's Miss Lawrence, Miss Ross, Mrs. Marshall, Mrs. Chilvers, Mamma, and myself. That makes twelve."

"Those were the ones I was going to name when you stopped me," declared Mr. Harding, who pretended to be much puzzled, but who knew full well what was the matter. He gave me a quiet nudge with his elbow, and then went on to say that the twelve of us would dine with the Bishops at six o'clock, and stay to the dance which would start as soon as it was dark. It ought to be great fun.

I wish I knew if Miss Harding resented the coupling of her name with Carter. I watched both of them closely, but neither gave a sign.

Chilvers tells me that Carter and Miss Harding have played several games together during the past week, and I assured him that the fact possessed not the slightest interest to me. Chilvers pretends to think it does, and seems to take much delight in harping on that subject.

As a matter of curiosity I should like to know when and where Carter first met the Hardings. Once or twice I have thrown out a hint to Carter, but he has not said a word.

Carter is a good-looking chap, and I think he knows it. The fond mammas here in the club consider him a catch. I am not exactly a pauper myself, but I may be if this N. O. & G. deal goes against me.

I wonder how it would seem to be poor? I wonder if Miss Harding would care to play golf with me if she knew I had to work for a living? I wonder what I would work at?

I dreamed last night that N.O. & G. stock went down and down until it was worth less than nothing, and that I had lost every dollar in the world and owed several millions.

It was an awful dream. I was in jail for a time, and when they let me out I did not have the car fare to get back to Woodvale. I walked all the way, and was chased by dogs. When I got here, the steward presented my bill, which amounted to several hundred dollars. I told him I could not pay it, and he marked my name off the membership list. I met Carter and several others and they would not speak to me. I was dying from hunger, and looked longingly at the remnants of a steak left by Chilvers, but one of the servants told me to move on.

Then the scene changed, as things move in dreams, and I was at work on Bishop's farm. I was cutting and shocking corn, and the boss of the hired help swore because I was so slow. My hands were bleeding from scratches where the sharp edges of the bayonet-like blades had cut them, and I was so hungry and tired that I was ready to lie down and die. My wages were fifteen dollars a month, and every cent of it had been levied against by my Wall Street creditors. Not until I was seventy years old would any of the money I earned be coming to me. The other hired men looked on me as a weakling, and laughed at the torn golf suit in which I was clothed.

I was happy when I awoke and realised it was only a nightmare.

I raised the curtain so as to let in the cool air. The links were bathed in a flood of moonlight. Half a mile away were Bishop's cornfields in which the dreamland fiends had tortured me. It was not yet midnight, and down the lane I made out the forms of Chilvers, Marshall, Lawson, and other nighthawks. Chilvers was singing, the others coming in the chorus of the last line, drawing it out to the full length and strength of a parody of the old negro song:

"Where, oh where are the long, long drivers? Where, oh where are the long, long drivers?; Where, oh where are the long, long drivers? 'Way down yander in the corn field."



ENTRY NO. X

THE TWO GLADIATORS

There was little doing in N.O. & G. stock on Monday or Tuesday. It dropped off a point and then recovered. I told my brokers to pick up 10,000 shares at or below 65. I am confident it will strike that figure before the end of the week.

It was nearly five o'clock before we started up the lane toward Bishop's. We were delayed half an hour waiting for Marshall, but, knowing his weakness, we fixed the time of departure half an hour sooner than necessary.

If Marshall's hope for eternal salvation depended on applying at the pearly gates at a specified time, he would spend eternity in the other place on account of being thirty minutes late. Knowing this to be his habit, we always provide against it. If the club house ever catches on fire, we shall lose Marshall, and he is a splendid good fellow.

Marshall's wife informs me it took him thirty weeks to propose after he had made up his mind to do so, and that after the wedding day was set it was necessary to postpone the ceremony thirty days in order to permit him to attend to some trifling business affairs. We call him "Thirty" Marshall, and it takes him thirty seconds to smile in appreciation of the jest. But he plays a good game of golf, with at least four deliberate practice swings before each stroke at the ball.

Chilvers wanted to have a team hitched up and ride over in the club bus. He said it tired him to walk. We vetoed that proposition, and Chilvers stopped twice to rest on the half-mile jaunt to Bishop's.

Chilvers thinks nothing of playing twice around Woodvale, a distance of not less than ten miles, but when in the city he takes a cab or a street car when compelled to go a few blocks. When there is no ball ahead of him he is the most fatigued man of my acquaintance, but he can stride over golf links from daybreak until it is so dark you cannot see the ball, and quit as fresh as when he started. There are others like Chilvers.

I walked with Mrs. Harding. I had a good chance to walk with Miss Harding, but wished to show Carter that it was a matter of indifference to me. More than that, it occurred to me it was not a bad plan to become better acquainted with Mrs. Harding.

The man who gets Mrs. Harding for a mother-in-law will be fortunate. None of the thrusts and jibes of the alleged funny men will apply to her as a mother-in-law.

One would not readily identify Mrs. Harding as the wife of a famous railway magnate. Wealth certainly has not turned her motherly head. Of course, she is a little woman. Huge men such as Harding invariably select dolls of women for helpmates. She is round, smiling, pretty, and thoughtful, and I like her immensely.

We were approaching the Bishop place. The orchard trees were covered with fruit. Some of the tomatoes showed the red of their fat cheeks through the green of their foliage. Miss Lawrence had started with LaHume, but under some pretext left him and was with Carter and Miss Harding, and I doubt if Carter was pleased with that evidence of his popularity. LaHume walked with Miss Ross and talked and laughed, but I could see he was angry.

It suddenly occurred to me that Miss Lawrence would probably meet Bishop's hired man, Wallace, and I presume LaHume was thinking of the same thing. It was apparent they had quarrelled over something.

Marshall and Chilvers were together, their wives trailing on behind, as usual. The way these two married men neglect these lovely women makes me angry every time I am out with them, but the ladies do not seem to care, and I presume it is none of my business.

Harding walked with everybody, and was happy as a lark. He threw stones at a telegraph pole, and was in ecstasy when a lucky shot shivered one of the glass insulators.

"How was that for a shot, mother?" he shouted, as the glass came flying down. "Hav'n't hit one of those since I was fourteen years old. Say, I wish I was fourteen years old now, barefooted, and sitting on the bank of that creek catching shiners."

"I wouldn't throw any more stones, Robert," Mrs. Harding said, laying her hand on his arm and looking up to his happy face. "The last time you threw stones you were lame for a week, and I had to rub you with arnica."

"But think of the fun I had," he said, and then he went back and told Marshall and Chilvers some yarn which must have been very amusing from the way they laughed.

I had been praising the beauties of the country around Woodmere, and asked Mrs. Harding how she liked the club house, and if she were enjoying her summer there.

"I would enjoy it much better," she said, "if I did not know that I should be home."

"I presume you feel that you are neglecting your social duties," I ventured.

"Social fiddlesticks," she laughed. "I should be home canning tomatoes and putting up fruit. We won't have a thing in the house fit to eat all next winter."

"But the servants," I began. "The servants----"

"If you knew as much about housekeeping as you do about golf," she said, "you would know that servants do not know how to preserve fruit. Last year I put up more than two hundred cans, and unless I can drag Mr. Harding away from here, it will be too late for everything except pears and quinces, and he does not care much for either."

Think of the wife of a multi-millionaire standing over a hot kitchen fire and preserving tomatoes, cherries, grapes, jams, jells, and all that kind of thing! I did not exactly know how to sympathise with her.

"It is nice down here," she said, after a pause, "but there's nothing to do."

"The drives are splendid," I said, "and I'm sure you would become interested in golf or tennis if you took them up."

"I mean that there's no work to do," she said. "I nearly had a row with my husband before he would let me darn his socks. He does not know it, but I keep the maid out of our rooms so that I can do the work myself. It's awful to sit around all day with nothing to do but read and do fancy work. I hate fancy work. If you have any socks which need darning, Mr. Smith, I wish you would let me have them."

We both laughed, but she was in earnest and made me promise I would turn over to her any socks which show signs of wear. I shall keep them as a memento.

That is the kind of a woman I should like for a mother-in-law.

And the more I see of Mr. Harding the better I like him. But I must record the many things which happened that afternoon and evening at Bishop's.

The fine old farmhouse is ideally located on a rising slope of ground. It is surrounded with the most beautiful grove of horse-chestnut trees in this section of the country.

The house is more than a hundred years old, and Bishop has the sense not to attempt an improvement in its exterior architecture. When a boy I spent most of my spare time in and around the Bishop house. Joe Bishop and I were chums, but when I went away to college, Joe wandered out West, and it is years since I have seen him. I have often thought that I must have been an awful source of bother to the Bishops, but they never seemed to mind it much. All of their children are grown up and married, but here the old folks are, working away as hard as when I was a child.

I suppose James Bishop is about Mr. Harding's age, somewhere between fifty and fifty-five. He in no way resembles the farmer of the cartoons. He wears a stubby moustache, and looks more the prosperous horseman than the typical farmer. He is a big man, a trifle taller than Mr. Harding, but not so broad of shoulder. Either of them would tip the beam at 230 pounds.

Bishop was at the gate waiting for us, and back of him two good-natured dogs bayed a noisy welcome.

"Come right in," he said, shaking hands with Harding. "If I'd known that you had to walk I'd hitched up a rig and come after ye. This is Mrs. Harding, I reckon," he said, grasping that lady's hand. "Glad to meet ye, Mrs. Harding! I knowed that thar husband of your'n when he wasn't bigger nor a pint of cider."

"Robert has often spoken of you, Mr. Bishop," said that lady. "How is Mrs. Bishop?"

"She's well; first-rate, thank ye. Come right in and we'll hunt her up," he said, leading the way. "I suppose she's puttering around in the kitchen."

I caught a glimpse of Mrs. Bishop through the window. She was hurriedly shedding a large calico apron, and met us as we were on the steps of the veranda. A woman trained in the conventionalities of society could not have conducted herself better than did this American wife of an American farmer, and I was proud of her as if she had been my own mother. She had the rare tact of making her guests feel perfectly at home.

Bishop had disappeared, but soon returned with an enormous glass pitcher and a tray of glasses.

"Here's some new sweet cider for the ladies," he said, pouring out a glass and handing it to Mrs. Harding. "Pressed it out this afternoon, and picked out the apples myself. Try some, Miss Harding. Here's a glass for you, Miss----, blamed if I hav'n't forgot your name already," proffering a glass to Miss Lawrence, "but we don't mind a little thing like that, do we."

"Indeed we do not," laughed Miss Lawrence.

"How about this?" demanded Chilvers. "What was that you said about cider for the ladies? My friend Marshall is dying for a drink, and my throat is as dusty as his boots. Do we walk two miles and then choke to death? We don't want to lose Marshall like this."

"You hold your horses a minute," grinned Bishop. "The ladies like sweet cider, God bless 'em, and I made this for them. If any of you fellows would like to try some real cider, the best that ever was raised in this State, come on and follow me. I reckon the ladies have seen all they want to of you for a while. Come on; I'll show you some cider that is cider."

He led us around the house until he came to a cellar door, which he threw back and we followed him. When our eyes became accustomed to the dim light we saw long rows of huge casks, mounted on frames so that the spigots were eighteen inches from the floor. The air was deliciously cool. It was permeated with the subtle odour of apple juice long confined in wood. Films of cobwebs softened the sharp lines of the cask heads and faintly gleamed between the rafters where the light struck them.

"Here's cider that is cider!" declared Bishop, proudly tapping on the heads of the great casks as he led the way into the darker recesses of the cellar. "I reckon, Bob," he said to Harding, "that it's a long time since you've had a chance to try a swig of real old Down East hard cider."

"It's been a long time, Jim," admitted Harding. "How old is this?"

"I've put in a cask every year since I took the place," he replied, "and that's more'n thirty years ago, and not a cask here but has cider in it."

"Cider thirty years old!" exclaimed Chilvers. "You mean vinegar, don't you?"

"I said cider, young man; an' when I say cider I mean cider," retorted Bishop, rather indignantly. "It is no more vinegar than brandy's vinegar, nor champagne's vinegar. Now, I don't reckon none of you, barring my old friend John Harding, here, ever tasted a drop of real hard cider. Oh, yes, Smith has, of course; but how about the rest of ye?"

Carter, LaHume, Marshall, and Chilvers admitted that their idea of hard cider was a beverage which had started to ferment.

Bishop placed his hand reverently on a blackened, time-charred cask. It was evident he was as proud of that possession as others might be of an authenticated Raphael.

"I don't tap this here very often," he said, "but in honour of this occasion I'll let it run a bit. This here cider is fifty years old!"

He drew off a pint or so in a stone jug, and we went out into the light to examine it. It was almost colourless, slightly amber in shade, if any tint can describe it. I had seen that sacred cask when a boy, and I recall now that Joe Bishop did not dare touch it, and there were few things of which he was afraid.

We all solemnly sampled it from small glasses, which Bishop produced from some mysterious hiding place.

"There is no taste to it," declared Chilvers. "It's smooth as oil, but it has no flavour."

"Hasn't, eh?" smiled Bishop. "You just wait a minute and you'll get the bouquet--as you wine experts call it. It's one of these coming tastes, but when it hits you you cry for more."

It was as the farmer said. There came to our palates the subtle gustatory perfume of apple blossoms. Within the old cask there had been stored the fragrance and the spell of the orchard of half a century ago. It was the wine of the apple; the favoured fruit of the gods.

"Is it supposed to be intoxicating?" asked Marshall. Bishop laughed uproariously, and Harding joined in his merriment.

"My boy," Bishop said, "it's as intoxicating as the feel of your sweetheart's cheek against your own, only it affects you in a different way. I've known a man to fill up on that smooth-tastin' and innocent lookin' stuff an' not come tew until he was on shipboard, an' half way to Cape Horn. Under its influence the secretary of a peace society would tackle the Japanese navy in a rowboat. From what I know about mythology I'm sure Mars drank it regular."

Our host drew a generous allowance from a cask containing a more recent vintage, and led the way from out the old cellar to seats beneath the trees facing the smooth turf of an unused croquet ground.

LaHume wandered away in search of the ladies, whose laughter and chatter from the near-by veranda proved they were cheerfully enduring his absence. I caught a glimpse of Wallace as he drove the cows into the old barn, and wondered if LaHume seriously considered the "hired man" as a rival.

We filled our pipes and lay back in the comfortable seats, content to listen to the music of the birds overhead, and follow aimlessly the conversation between Bishop and Harding. The cider from the sacred cask had bridged the years which separated them from boyhood days back in Buckfield, Maine.

The old grindstone reminded Harding of an incident, to the telling of which both contributed details. They told of swimming exploits; of how they helped lock the school teacher out of the little red building which seemed to them a prison; they told of blood-curdling feats of coasting and of skating on thin ice, and of other things more or less distorted, perhaps, when seen through the haze of forty years.

Then they told of the boys they had "licked," and of the boys who had whipped them, also of the feud between the lads of Buckfield and Sumner and the desperate encounters which resulted from it.

"Do you remember, Bob," asked Bishop, after a moment's pause, "of that 'rasslin' match we had on the floor of your dad's barn?"

"The time I got a black eye, and you lost part of your ear?" asked Harding, his eyes brightening at thought of it.

"That's the time," declared Bishop. "I tore your clothes most to pieces."

"I don't remember about that," responded the railroad magnate, "but I do remember that I flopped you three times out of five."

"Three times outer nothin'!" exclaimed the farmer. "I put you down fair and square three times running, Bob, and if you'll stop and think a minute you'll recollect it."

"Recollect nothing!" defiantly laughed Harding. "You never saw the day in your life, when you or any boy in Buckfield could put my shoulders to the ground three times running. You're losing your memory, Jim."

"I did it all right."

"I say you didn't!"

"And I can do it again!"

"You can, eh?" shouted Harding, springing to his feet and pulling off his coat. "We'll mighty quick see if you can! I'll tackle you right here on this croquet ground!"

"Side holt, square holt, or catch-as-catch-can?" asked Bishop, casting one anxious look towards the house.

"We always rassled catch-as-catch-can, and you know it," declared Harding. "I suppose you think just because I do nothing but build railroads and things that I've grown effeminate since you tackled me the last time. Come on; I'll show you!"

"I'm afraid I'll hurt you, Bob," said Bishop, and I could see that he honestly meant it. "I've been outer doors all my life, an' you've been----"

"I suppose you think I've been in an incubator, don't ye?" snorted Harding. "Don't weaken! Don't be a coward, Jim! There's the line; toe it!" and he marked a crease in the soft turf.

"You bet I'll toe it!" growled the now irate farmer. "And don't whimper if I break a bone or two when I flop ye!"

As Bishop threw his cap to the ground and rushed toward the defiant millionaire Carter saw fit to interfere.

"Don't do this," he protested, jumping between them. "One of you will get hurt! It's dangerous for men of your age to wrestle!"

Both of them reached out and brushed Carter away, and the next instant they were at it.

Bishop ducked and got an underhold, and I was sure Harding would go down, but he braced himself with his huge legs, and with the strength of a giant broke the clasp of his opponent's arms. It takes skill as well as muscle to do this, and I saw at a glance that Harding had not forgotten the tricks of his boyhood. As Bishop spun half-way around the other caught him at a disadvantage, raised him clear from the turf and dashed him down, falling with all his weight upon him.

It was as clean and quick a fall as I have seen, but for a second my heart stood still, fearing Bishop's neck had been broken. He gasped once or twice, and then I heard a muffled laugh.

"Let me up, Bob; that's one for you!" he said, and both struggled to their feet. There was a rent in the right knee of Harding's trousers, and his shirt was a sight, but he neither knew of this nor would have cared for it.

"Not quite so soft and easy as you thought I was eh, Jim?" he panted, extending his hand. "You got the holt all right, but you wasn't quick enough."

"I held you too cheap that time," admitted Bishop, rather sheepishly, throwing away a pair of ruined suspenders, "but I'll get you this time. Come on, Bob!"

"You referee this match, Smith!" said Harding, standing on guard. "You know the rules. No fall unless both shoulders and one hip is down."

Misfortune had taught Bishop caution. I could see he feared Harding's enormous strength and that he aimed to wind him if possible. He managed to elude the grasp of his antagonist for probably a minute, and more by luck than skill fell on top when the end of the clinch came. But Harding was not down by any means, and there then ensued a struggle which made me oblivious to all surroundings.

Though I was the referee I was "rooting" for Harding, and so was Carter, while Marshall and Chilvers were giving mental and vocal encouragement to Bishop. I do not suppose any of us realised we were saying a word.

First Harding would have a slight advantage, and then the tide would turn in favour of Bishop. The latter was more agile, but the former outclassed him in power. They writhed along that croquet ground like two gigantic tumble-bugs locked in a life and death struggle. Neither said a word, and both were absolutely fair in attack and defense. As the struggle continued it seemed to me that Harding was weakening, but he told me later he was merely resting for the effort which would insure him victory.

I heard the swish of skirts, the frightened cry of female voices, and the next instant two most estimable ladies invaded the improvised ring and laid hands on the principals.

I doubt if the combined physical exertion of Mrs. Bishop and Mrs. Harding could have made the slightest impress on the embrace which held their lords and masters, but what they said had a magical and peacemaking effect.

"James Bishop, you should be ashamed of yourself!" exclaimed Mrs. Bishop, tugging at the remnant of a shirt, which promptly detached itself from the general wreck.

"Robert Harding, what do you mean by fighting?" gasped Mrs. Harding, tugging at his undershirt, the outer garment long since having lost its entity.

Instantly they relaxed their holds, rolled over and came to a sitting posture, facing each other and their respective wives. It was as if the act had carefully been rehearsed, and was ludicrous beyond any description at my command.

Their glances rested for an instant on one another, and then on their frightened and indignant helpmates. Their attitude was that of two schoolboys detected by their teachers in some forbidden act. I am sure Harding would have spoken sooner if he could have recovered his breath.

"We're not fighting, my dear!" he managed to say. "Are we, Jim?" he added with a mighty effort.

"Of course not," declared Bishop, gouging a piece of turf from his eye. "We're only rasslin'; that's all, isn't it, Bob?"

"And you in your best suit of clothes, James Bishop!" exclaimed his good wife.

"You should see how you look, Mr. Harding," added his better half with justifiable emphasis. "Are you hurt?" anger changing to solicitude.

"Of course I'm not hurt," he asserted. "We were only fooling. Where in thunder is my shirt?"

And then Chilvers and Carter and Marshall and I exploded. It was not a dignified thing to do, and I apologised to both of the ladies afterward, but we fell down on that mutilated croquet-ground and laughed until exhausted. I am glad Miss Harding and the others were not there.

Assisted by their wives the two gladiators had struggled to their feet, but the most cursory inspection disclosed that they were more presentable when on the ground. And then the ladies joined in the laugh.

"Jack," said Mr. Bishop, who has called me by that nickname since I was seven years old, "Jack, go out to the old barn and get a pair of horse blankets. You know where I keep them."

"You've got a great head on you, Jim," roared Harding. "I was thinking of a pair of barrels."

When I returned with the red and yellow blankets the ladies had disappeared.

"Never mind sending down to the club for your other clothes," Bishop was saying. "I've got several suits, such as they are, and I reckon one of them will fit ye."

"This blanket is pretty good," declared the magnate. "Say, Jim, what was it you said about that fifty-year-old cider?"

"I'm glad I didn't give you any more of it; I'd lost my life as well as my clothes," declared the farmer. "If they'd stayed away 'nother minute or so I'd won that second fall, sure as sin, Bob," he said, rather ruefully, as we wrapped the blanket around him.

"You just think you would," grinned Harding, lifting up the blanket so as to keep from stumbling over it. "Say, it must be tough to have to wear skirts all the time. Be a good fellow, Smith, and hold up my train."

They tried to sneak in at the back entrance, but Miss Harding and the others saw them and headed them off. I shall never forget their looks of amazement, and then the screams of laughter which followed the hurried explanation.

I must postpone an account of the dinner and the dance until the next entry.



ENTRY NO. XI

THE BARN DANCE

We gave Mr. Harding a great reception when he appeared on the veranda, arrayed in garments furnished by our host. I have an idea Mr. Bishop's wardrobe was about exhausted when the two of them had completed their toilet.

"What do you think of me?" demanded Harding, striking a pose.

He obtained a variety of opinions. They were unable to find a "boiled shirt" with an eighteen inch neck band or collar, so a blue gingham one was made to do service. The only coat broad enough across the shoulders was a "Prince Albert," in which Bishop had been married, and Harding admitted the combination was not exactly *_de rigueur_*. The trousers were woefully tight at the waist, and were inches too long.

"You are lucky to get anything," declared Mrs. Harding, retying the wonderful red and yellow scarf and vainly attempting to smooth out some of the wrinkles in the coat.

"You should be made to go home and to bed without your supper."

"You surely are the real goods, Governor," said Chilvers, walking about him and inspecting his costume from all angles. "What show have Marshall and the rest of us at to-night's dance against you?"

Miss Lawrence pinned a bunch of nasturtiums on his coat, and we all stood and hilariously admired him. Bishop called him aside and motioned me to join them.

"Mother and I don't know what to do about Wallace," our host said, after hesitating a moment. "He's our hired man, you know," he added.

"What about him?" asked Harding.

"He's always eaten with us," Bishop said. "He's a quiet, well-behaved sorter chap, and he's company for us, but mother is afraid it wouldn't be just the thing to have him at the table when company's here, and so I thought I'd ask you and Jack. We don't have folks here very often, and I want to do what's right."

"You have him sit right down with us," promptly advised Harding. "If there's anybody in this country who has a right to eat good and plenty it's a hired man. If any of our folks don't like it, let them wait until the second table."

That settled it, and I could see that Bishop was pleased over the outcome.

"I sorter hated to tell Wallace to wait," he said to me after Harding had turned away. "It might offend him. He's a queer fish, but has the makings of the best hired man in the county."

When we entered the big dining-room Wallace was sitting in one corner reading. He laid aside the book, arose and bowed slightly. Harding went right up to him.

"Mr. Wallace, I believe," he said, shaking hands. "My name's Harding, and I'll introduce you to the rest of us." And he did.

This young Scotchman is a handsome chap. His features are those of Byron in his early manhood. His hair is dark and wavy as it falls back from a smooth high forehead. He is tall, broad of shoulder and singularly easy and graceful in his movements. He certainly looks like a man who has seen better days.

I am still inclined to my original opinion that he is some college chap who is trying to get a financial start so as to enter on his chosen profession.

He sat opposite me, and not until the first course was served did I notice that he was to the right of Miss Lawrence, with LaHume to her left. When I first observed this trio Miss Lawrence and Wallace already were engaged in a spirited conversation--or, more properly speaking, Miss Lawrence was.

There was a babble of voices and of laughter, and I could make out little they were saying during the early part of the dinner, though I was so impolite as to attempt to do so. Miss Lawrence was praising the scenic beauties of Woodvale and its environs, he adding a word or a sentence now and then with the tact of one pleased to listen to the chatter of a charming companion. The trace of Scotch in his enunciation was so slight as to defy reproduction, but it was sufficient to stamp the place of his nativity.

LaHume made several attempts to join in their conversation, and though Wallace lent him all possible aid Miss Lawrence effectually discouraged LaHume's participation. He reminded me of a boy making ineffectual attempts to "catch on behind" a swift-moving sleigh, and who is finally tumbled on his head for his pains.

Mrs. Bishop is famous the country round as a cook, and she excelled herself that afternoon. Bishop is a crank on truck gardening, and the vegetables served would have taken prizes in any exhibit. A delicious soup was followed by a baked sea trout--I must not forget to ask Mrs. Bishop how she made that sauce.

I wonder why it is that the most skilled hotel chefs cannot fry spring chicken so as to faintly imitate the culinary wonders attained by a capable housewife?

"I want to ask you a question, Mrs. Bishop," said Mr. Harding, after he had made a pretense of refusing a third helping of fried chicken. "Did you really raise these chickens on this farm?"

Mrs. Bishop smiled and said they did.

"I don't believe it," he returned. "If the truth were known they lit down here from heaven, and Jim Bishop nailed them and you cooked them."

I was ashamed of Chilvers. He ate seven ears of green corn and boasted of it, but I will admit I did not know it was possible to produce corn such as was served at that farmhouse dinner. The crisp sliced cucumbers, the ice-cold tomatoes, the succulent hearts of lettuce, the steaming dishes of string beans, summer squash, and green peas--it makes me hungry as I write of that simple but excellent feast.

I thought as we sat there of the democracy of that little gathering. There was Harding, the multi-millionaire railway magnate, in his hickory shirt; the fastidious and monocled Carter with his wealth and boasted New England ancestry; Miss Lawrence, an heiress in whose veins flowed the purest blood of the southern aristocracy; Mr. and Mrs. Bishop, plain honest folk from 'way down east in Maine; and the unknown Wallace, driven no doubt by stress of poverty from the hills of his beloved country--there we all were meeting one another as equals, enjoying the bounties Nature has so lavishly bestowed on her children.

I caught Miss Harding's eye, and she smiled as if in sympathy with my wandering thoughts. It takes a remarkably pretty young woman to lose none of her charm while eating green corn off the cob, but Miss Harding triumphantly stands that test. She was talking to Marshall, who is so constitutionally slow that he is invariably half a course behind everyone else at a table.

Marshall was attempting to explain to Miss Harding how it is possible to hook a ball and play off the right foot. He laid out a diagram on the table cloth, using "lady-fingers" to show the positions of the feet, a round radish to indicate the ball, and a fruit knife to illustrate the face and direction of the club.

Chilvers watched this most unconventional dinner performance with a grin on his face, and just as Marshall was showing just how the club should follow through, Chilvers called "Fore!" in a sharp tone. Miss Harding and Marshall were so absorbed in the elucidation of this most difficult golf problem that they instinctively dodged, and when Miss Harding recovered, her cheeks were delightfully crimson.

I never noticed until that moment that there are traces of dimples in her cheeks. Unless Venus had dimples she had no just claim to be crowned the goddess of love and beauty.

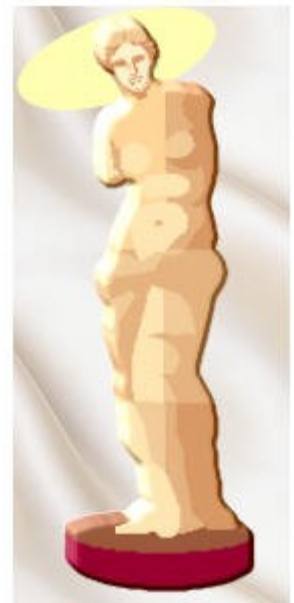
"Jim," said Mr. Harding, addressing our host, when coffee was served, "did you know our friend Smith when he was a kid?"

"Knew him when he couldn't look over this table," replied Mr. Bishop.

"What kind of a boy was he?"

"Full of the Old Nick, like most healthy boys," he answered. "He and my boy Joe went to school together, got into trouble together and got out of it again. What was it the boys used to call you, Jack?" he said to me, a twinkle in his eye.

"Never mind," I said, and attempted to turn the conversation, but it was no use.



"They used to call him 'Socks Smith,'" said Bishop. "That was it, 'Socks Smith.' I hadn't thought of it in years."

"What an alliterative nickname," laughed Mrs. Chilvers. "How did you ever acquire it, Mr. Smith?"

"He won't tell ye," declared my tormentor, without waiting for me to say a word, "but it's nothin' to his discredit. You know that mill pond where --"

"Don't tell that incident," I protested.

"Tell it! Tell it, Mr. Bishop!" pleaded Miss Lawrence, Miss Harding, and others in chorus.

"Sure I'll tell it," continued Bishop. "As I was saying, you all know the mill pond where you folks try to drive golf balls over. Well, it uster be bigger an' deeper than it is now, and in the winter it was the skating place for all the lads in the neighbourhood. Up at the far end there is a spring, and even in the coldest weather it don't freeze over above that spring."

"One bitter cold day--and it never gets cold enough to keep boys off smooth ice--young Smith, here--he was about twelve or fourteen years old at that time--was out on the ice with his skates on, wrapped up in an overcoat, a comforter over his ears and thick mittens on his hands, skatin' around that pond with my boy Joe and other lads, all of them thinkin' they was havin' the time of their lives. Mother, what was the name of that poor family that lived over in the old Bobbins' house at the time?"

"Andersons," said Mrs. Bishop.

"That's right; Andersons," continued the Boswell of my infantile exploits. "Well, these Andersons were so poor they didn't have any skates, but some of the boys had let them take a sled, and two of these little Anderson kids were slidin' around on the ice and havin' all the fun they could, even if they didn't have skates. I suppose their toes was as cold and their noses as blue, and that's half of skatin' or sleighin'."

"Smith, Joe, and the other skaters were on the southwest end of the pond playin' 'pigeon goal,' and these poor Anderson kids were slidin' around up at the other end where they would be out of the way. The wind was blowin' pretty hard, and I suppose they were careless; anyhow a gust struck them and swept them along into that air hole."

"They yelled as best they could, and some boys who were near them hollered, and the boys who were skating heard them and came tearing along to see what was the matter. Jack Smith, here, was fixing a strap or somethin', and was the last one to get started. The whole bunch of them were standin' 'round watching those poor Anderson kids drown, so scared they didn't know what to do. The poor little tots were hanging onto the sled right out in the middle of an open space about thirty yards wide."

"Jack, here, never stopped a second. He saw what was up as he came skatin' along, and he legged it all the harder, and in he went--skates, overcoat, comforter, mittens and all. It's no easy job swimmin' with such an outfit, to say nothin' of rescuin' two half-drowned youngsters, and I don't know how he did it, and I don't reckon you do either, Jack. But anyhow, he got to them, paddled along to the edge of the ice, and held on to them until the other boys pushed out boards and finally got the whole caboodle of 'em up on solid ice."

"Bully for you, Smith!" exclaimed Chilvers, "didn't know it was in you."

"Mr. Chilvers is jealous of you," declared Miss Lawrence. "I think it was real heroic."

"So do I," asserted Miss Harding, "but I cannot imagine how you acquired so absurd a nickname as 'Socks Smith' from that incident."

"Was the water cold?" asked Marshall.

"I hav'n't finished my story," said Mr. Bishop, after these and other comments had-been made. "I reckon the water was some cold, and the air colder; at any rate I happened along in my wagon just as they were draggin' them out, and before I could get them up to Smith's father's house the whole bunch of them was frozen so stiff that I had to pack 'em into the kitchen like so much cordwood."

"But boys of that age are tough, and when they had been thawed out, boiled in hot baths, and blistered with mustard poultices they was as good as new, and I reckon the Anderson kids was a mighty sight cleaner than they had been since the last time they went in swimmin'."

"Now, as I said before, these Andersons were desperate poor, but they were good folks, and what you might call appreciative. Jack had saved the lives of two of the family, and they wanted to show what they thought of him in some way or other. There was twelve children in the Anderson family, six boys and six girls, and the older girls and the old lady went to work, and blamed if they didn't knit a dozen pair of woollen socks and sent them to Jack as a Christmas present."

"And that is how Jack got the name of 'Socks Smith,'" concluded Mr. Bishop, when the laughter had subsided. "For riskin' his life he got all those nice warm socks and a nickname that uster make him so darned mad that I suppose he's had a hundred fights on account of it, and I'm not certain he won't poke me in the jaw when he gets me alone for tellin' this yarn on him."

"This darned woollen yarn," observed Marshall.

"You're all right, Socks," declared Chilvers. "I only wish I could get as good a press agent as our friend Bishop. When I was a kid I used to push 'em into the pond and run, and let someone else fish them out."

"If a man were to do an act as brave as that," asserted Miss Harding, "the world would acclaim him a hero, and not pile ridicule on him."

"All of which proves that no boy is a hero to another boy," commented Mr. Harding, "and that is as it should be. Boys get their heroes out of books, and as a rule they are fighters and pirates rather than of the self-sacrificing type."

I was glad when Miss Lawrence changed the topic of conversation.

"What do you think?" she exclaimed, addressing no one in particular, "I have discovered that Mr. Wallace knows how to play golf, and that he learned the game on some of the famous old courses of Scotland. He has promised to teach me the St. Andrews swing."

LaHume's face was a study as Miss Lawrence made this rather startling announcement. Surprise, disgust, and anger were reflected in his eyes and in the lines of his mouth.

"You have played St. Andrews?" asked Carter of Wallace.

"Yes, many a time," said this remarkable "hired man." "I was born hard-by the old town," he added.

"Indeed?" sneered LaHume. "What were you while there; caddy or professional?"

I thought I detected a flash of anger in the eyes of the young Scotchman, but if offended he controlled himself admirably. Not so with Miss Lawrence, who glared indignantly at LaHume.

"I doubt if I knew enough of the game," said Wallace, quietly, "to be either. I merely played there and at other places when I had the opportunity."

"Mr. Wallace says that St. Andrews does not compare with some of the newer links in Scotland," declared Miss Lawrence, ignoring LaHume.

"Which ones, for instance?" asked Carter, who has played over most of the fine courses in Great Britain.

"Muirfield and Prestwick offer better golf than St. Andrews, and are not so crowded," replied Wallace. "The farther you get from St. Andrews the greater its reputation, but it is too rough for perfect golf. A long, straight drive is often penalised by a bad lie, and an indifferent shot favoured by a good one, which is more luck than golf."

Carter smiled, and he afterwards told me it struck him as odd that a farmhand should converse in such words and on so peculiar a topic. Wallace good-naturedly and modestly answered a number of questions, but evaded telling the class of his game.

I wonder where Miss Lawrence will receive those lessons which will enable her to acquire the "St. Andrews swing"? I doubt if our rules will permit this remarkable farm labourer to play over Woodvale, even as the guest or at the request of Miss Lawrence. I shall watch developments with much interest.

Wallace asked to be excused, observing with a laugh that it was milking time, and a few minutes later we saw him pass the window, clad in blue overalls and a "jumper."

"Tell you what I'll do with you, LaHume," said Chilvers, who never misses an opportunity to stir up trouble. "I'll bet you a box of Haskells that our Scotch friend, who is now out there milking, can outdrive you twenty yards, and I never saw him with a club in his hands."

"I am not his rival in that or in any other capacity," warmly declared LaHume.

At this instant our hostess arose, giving the signal that the dinner was ended, and we adjourned to the lawn. LaHume said something to Miss Lawrence; she laughed scornfully, and left him and joined Miss Harding.

After cigars and pipes we inspected the new red barn. It is a huge structure, modern in every particular, and Bishop was properly proud of it. The lofts were partially filled with sweet clover hay, and the odour combined with that of the new pine lumber was delicious. The floor had been planed smooth, and oiled and waxed so as to make an excellent space for dancing. The uprights were twined with ivy and decorated with wild flowers, and the effect was pleasing.

The guests were already arriving in all sorts of vehicles, from farm wagons to automobiles.

An "orchestra" of five pieces was on hand, and the musicians took their places beneath a cluster of Chinese lanterns. There were fully a hundred on the floor at nine o'clock, when Mr. Harding and Mrs. Bishop led off in the grand march. I had secured Miss Harding as my partner, and LaHume and Miss Lawrence were behind us. Carter was with some village beauty, but I saw nothing of Wallace in the grand march.

Later he appeared and danced a waltz with Miss Ross, and they made a handsome couple. The "hired man" was as well dressed as any gentleman in the room, and I have never seen a more graceful dancer than that tall, young Scotchman. LaHume

watched him like a hawk. When Wallace claimed Miss Lawrence for a schottische the glum LaHume stood by the door and looked as if he would rather fight than dance. Chilvers told him he was making an ass of himself.

It was a glorious night beneath the radiance of a full moon which silvered the lace-work of a mackerel sky. I never fully realised what dancing was until Miss Harding favoured me with a polka. And then we wandered out into the moonlight, talked about the moon, and hunted for the Great Dipper.

Even a plain woman looks pretty when with eyes and chin lifted she gazes at the star-studded heavens, her face profiled against the gleaming orb of a full moon, but no words of mine can describe the splendid beauty of Miss Harding in that attitude. I tried to think of something to say, but was under a spell and could think of nothing, and it was perhaps just as well. I composed some ripping good sentences before I went to sleep that night, but it was too late to use them, and I shall not record them here.

And then we met Wallace and Miss Lawrence, her arm drawn through his, her face lifted toward his, and her tongue going when she was not laughing. They were "walking out" a dance, and evidently enjoying it.

Mr. Harding had the time of his life. He danced with stout farm wives, slender village maidens, and executed a clog dance which made the barn shudder on its foundations. He led the singing, told stories to groups of farmers who shouted with laughter, and refused to go home until Mrs. Harding took him by the arm and fairly dragged him away.

I walked home with Miss Harding.

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ENTRY NO. XII

THE ST. ANDREWS SWING

A week has passed since I made the last entry in this diary, and a number of peculiar things have happened.

My brokers have brought an additional 10,000 shares of N.O. & G., which brings my speculative holdings to a total of 25,000 shares. They acquired the last block at an average price of 65, and the market closed to-night at 63. If I were to settle at this figure I would be loser to the amount of \$150,000, not including the \$23,000 lost on the first two thousand shares purchased, on which I have taken my losses. Counting commissions and interest I am about \$175,000 to the bad, but am not in the least worried.

My brokers are now placing their orders through houses in other cities, and I am certain the extent of my operations is a secret beyond the slightest question.

The qualifying round for the "Harding Trophy" brought out the largest field of players in the history of our club competitions. Of course most of those who started declared that they had no expectation of winning, or even of qualifying in the first sixteen. For instance, there was Peabody, whose best medal score is 112.

"Are you going to play for that bronze gent?" demanded Chilvers, as Peabody came to the first tee.

"Thought I might just as well enter," said Peabody. "Of course I know I haven't a chance in the world to win."

"You never can tell," said Chilvers, his face solemn as an owl. Chilvers is a merciless "kidder."

"That's right," admitted Peabody.

"If you play the way I saw you doing the other day, there's not a man in the club has anything on you," asserted Chilvers, winking at me.

"Stranger things have happened," declared Peabody, his face illuminated by a hopeful grin. "I made the last hole yesterday in five, and that is as good as Carter or Smith have done it in this year."

Now, as a matter of fact, there was not one chance in five hundred that Peabody would qualify, and he didn't, but that did not prevent his starting out with a hope and a sort of a faith that by some bewildering combination of circumstances he would qualify, and later on bowl over all of his competitors and carry off the prize with the sweeter honours of victory.

If there be any soil where hope absolutely runs riot it is in the breast of a golfer. The fond mother who cozens herself into the faith that her boy will some day be President of the United States builds on the same foundation as the duffer who enters a competition in which he is outclassed.

Personally I can see no reason why I shall not some day win the international golf championship, and I have strong expectations of doing so, but know perfectly well that I will not. It is a peculiar but delightful complication of mind.

Carter had the best qualifying score, making the round in a consistent eighty. Marshall was second with an eighty-two, Boyd and LaHume were tied with eighty-four each, and I came in fifth with one more. Chilvers, Pepper, and Thomas also qualified, but the cup should lie among the first five.

Candour compels me to admit that on form it should come to a struggle between Carter and Marshall; but if I get into the finals with either of these gentlemen I shall play with confidence of winning.

A most astounding thing has happened! If I were incorporating these events in a narrative or a novel I presume I would reserve the statement I am about to make until the finish, so as to form an effective climax--and on reflection I have decided to do so in these notes. So I will begin at the beginning.

The second day after our visit to Bishop's, Miss Lawrence called me aside on the veranda, and I could see that some great secret had possession of her.

"I wish to ask a favour of you, Mr. Smith," she said, after beating about the brush for a minute.

"Anything at my command is yours," I said.

"I have come to you," she said, "because I know that you are one of the members of the club who can keep a secret. Not that this is any tremendous affair," she added, a blush faintly touching her cheek, "but I don't care to have everybody know it."

I assured her that wild horses could not drag from me any confidence reposed.

"I want to borrow some of your clubs," she faltered.

"My clubs?"

"Yes; some old ones which you do not use regularly."

"You may have any or all the clubs I have," I assured her. "When do you wish them?"

"Right now."

She was silent a moment, and I was too mystified to frame any comment.

"I am going to tell you all about it," she impulsively declared, laying her little hand on my arm. "I want them for Mr. Wallace!"

"Mr. Wallace?" I repeated. At that instant I could not think whom she meant.

"Mr. Bishop's assistant."

"Oh, yes!" I exclaimed. By a mighty effort I kept from smiling. It was the first time I had heard a "hired man" called an "assistant," and I have heard them called many names.

"Do you remember that at the dinner I said Mr. Wallace had promised to teach me the St. Andrews swing?" she asked, her eyes bright with excitement.

"Yes."

"I took my first lesson yesterday afternoon. Miss Ross and I went over to Mr. Bishop's after dinner, as we arranged we should during the dance. We put our clubs in my auto when no one was looking, and went by a roundabout way to the big sheep pasture to the east of the farmhouse. Do you know where it is?"

"Perfectly."

"It was still half an hour from sunset, and Mr. Wallace was there waiting for us. Mr. Smith," clasping her hands, "you should see that gentleman play golf!"

"I had an idea he could play from the moment he lofted your sliced ball over the fence that afternoon," I said.

"Can you go with us?" she asked suddenly. "Miss Ross and I promised Mr. Wallace we would come over this afternoon and I bring a set of men's clubs with us, and it would be just splendid for you to go with us. Will you go, Mr. Smith?"

I assured her it would be a pleasure. At that moment Miss Harding appeared, and we quickly decided to let her into the secret.

"Mr. Wallace said he would arrange with Mr. Bishop to get away from his work an hour or so any time we came over this afternoon," explained Miss Lawrence, "so there will be no deception on his part."

"Oh, you should see him drive!" exclaimed Miss Ross, raising her eyes as if following a ball which was travelling an enormous distance. "And he did not dare hit them hard for fear of breaking my club. It was perfectly lovely!"

"And approach!" added Miss Lawrence.

"And putt!" declared Miss Ross. "It was grand!"

"Let us see this paragon of all the golfing virtues without delay," laughed Miss Harding, and half an hour later our automobile stopped in front of the Bishop house.

Wallace must have been on the outlook for us, since he appeared directly. He seemed a bit surprised to see me, but greeted us pleasantly.

"Miss Lawrence and Miss Ross were so kind as to praise shots I made yesterday," he explained, "but, as Mr. Smith will understand, the good ones were more or less lucky, for it is long since I have had a club in my hand. However, I will do the best I can to illustrate the typical Scottish swings, as I execute them, but please do not expect too much."

We ran the auto into the sheep pasture, and I presume it was the first invasion of those haunts by this modern vehicle. At least the sheep seemed to so regard it, and ran bleating in every direction. It is an ideal spot for an exhibition of the long game, and Bishop has had many offers from golf clubs seeking a location for links. That farmer gentleman appeared shortly after we arrived at the crest of a gentle hill.

"No trespassin' on these here premises!" he grinned.

"How are ye, everybody? Miss Lawrence tells me that my man Wallace, here, is a crackerjack drivin' one of them golf balls. You'd ought to see him drive a team when he first come here. Took him two weeks to learn the difference between 'gee' and 'haw,' and to tell the 'nigh' from the 'off' boss, but I suppose drivin' a golf ball is a sight easier. But I won't bother ye. I'll just stand here and watch. Perhaps I might learn somethin'."

It was a warm afternoon and Wallace laid aside his thin jacket. He was dressed in a tennis suit which fitted him perfectly. Bishop called me aside.

"That chap has two or three trunks full of all kinds of clothes," he said in a whisper, "but this is the first time I ever saw this one. What do you call it?"

"That's a tennis suit," I said.

"Tennis!" he grunted. "That's worse than golf, isn't it, Jack?"

I laughed, and then we turned our attention to the young Scotchman.

The moment he grasped my driver and swung it with an easy but powerful wrist movement I knew he was an expert. You can almost pick the good golfer by the way he takes a club from a bag. His skill is shown in his manner of teeing a ball, and no duffer ever "addressed" the sphere or "waggled" his club so as to deceive those who know the game.



Wallace did not tee the ball on any raised inequality of the turf, but simply placed it on a smooth spot, such as one would select as the average brassie lie. If I had any lingering doubt as to his ability, this one preliminary act dispelled it.

Now that I calmly recall this scene in that sheep pasture, its dramatic grotesqueness rather appeals to me. Here were three young ladies, all of them pretty, all wealthy and holding high social positions, watching with bated breath a farmhand of unknown birth in the act of striking a golf ball. Surely golf is the great leveller! Perhaps it is the hope of the ultimate democracy; the germ of the ideal brotherhood of man.

I presume Bishop was thinking that Wallace would better be employed in running a mowing machine.

"The Scotch method of making a full drive," said Wallace, facing his interested little audience, and speaking with more enthusiasm than was his wont, "or, if you prefer it, the St. Andrews style, is distinguished from most types by what might be termed its exaggerated freedom. It is a full, free swing with an abandoned follow through. It probably comes from the confidence which has been handed down from generations of a golf-playing people. The Scotch are a conservative and deliberate people in most things, but the way they seem to hit a golf ball gives to most observers the impression of carelessness and lack of considered effort. That, I should say," he concluded, with a droll smile, "is enough for the preacher."

I felt mortally certain Wallace would make a failure of that first shot, and he told me later he was rather nervous, but he took no unnecessary chances.

He used a three-quarter swing--at least so it appeared to me--such a one I should employ to drive a low ball about one hundred and fifty yards. He seemed to put no effort into it, but the result proved there was not an ounce of misapplied energy. It all seemed unstudied, but I knew that every muscle and sinew of his lithe and well-proportioned body was working to the end that the face of his club should not swerve by one hair's breadth from the course he had planned for it.

It was the ball which we less-favoured golfers dream shall some day be ours to command; the ball which starts low, rises in a concave curve, and ends its trajectory in a slight slant to the left--the low, hooked ball. It was not a phenomenally long drive; about two hundred yards, I should say, but for the apparent effort expended I have never seen a more perfect shot.

"Why in thunder don't you hit it hard, Wallace?" demanded Bishop. "Soak it, man, soak it! That was only a love tap."

I would rather have stood in the shoes of that "hired man," and listened to the comments of those three girls, than to rival the eloquence of Demosthenes, and withstand the surges of the applause of admiring thousands.

"Let me drive two or three easy ones, Mr. Bishop," Wallace said, placing another ball on the turf, "and then I will press a bit, and see if I have lost the feel of a full swing."

It was a wonderful exhibition of clean, long driving. He teed a dozen balls, and I doubt if one of them fell fifteen yards outside the line of the lone walnut tree which had been selected as the target. The ground was fairly level, and Mr. Bishop and I paced the distance to the outer ball. We agreed that it was about two hundred and forty yards from the point driven, and seven of the twelve balls were found within a radius of fifteen yards. In fact all of them would have been on or near the edge of a large putting green.

I have seen longer driving, but nothing equalling it in accuracy or consistency.

"It is very much better than I had expectation of doing," said Wallace. "That is a well-balanced club of yours, Mr. Smith, but a bit too short and whippy for me."

He good-naturedly consented to try lofting and approaching shots. On the start he was a little unsteady, due probably to lack of familiarity with my clubs, which are made to conform with some of my pet hobbies. After a few minutes' practice he got the hang of them and did really brilliant work.

With a mashie at one hundred and twenty yards he dropped ball after ball within a short distance of a stake which served to indicate a cup. He picked them clean from the turf, lofting them with that back-spin which causes them to drop almost dead. It was the golf I have always claimed to be within the range of possibility, but I never hoped to see it executed. Even Bishop was impressed with the skill displayed by his employee, and as the balls soared true from his club, like quoits from the hand of a sturdy expert, the farmer grinned his appreciation.

"I don't know much about this here game, Jack," he said, as Wallace rejoined us, "but it looks to me as if this man of mine has you Woodvale fellows skinned a mile. Tell you what I'll do! I'll back him for ten dollars against any man you've got."

"I am not eligible to play in Woodvale," observed Wallace, a peculiar smile hovering on his lips, "so it is useless to discuss that."

"You shall play as my guest," declared Miss Lawrence. "I have a perfect right to--"

"I should be glad to extend that courtesy to Mr. Wallace at any time," I interrupted, fearing that she might say something which would be misconstrued.

"I thank both of you, but it is out of the question," said Wallace with quiet dignity, and Miss Harding with her usual tact changed the topic by asking Wallace to illustrate a certain point relating to the short approach shot.

On our way back to the auto I walked with Mr. Bishop, and of a sudden a thought occurred to me.

"I am in an important competition for a trophy presented to the club by Mr. Harding," I explained, "and I wish you to do me a favour."

"What kind of a favour?"

"If I can arrange with Wallace to give me a few lessons in driving and approaching, will you have any objections? It would put some extra money in his pocket."

"Not after he is through with his work," Bishop said, hesitating a moment. "But I can't have you folks takin' up his time as a regular thing when he should be out in the field. This thing to-day is all right enough, and I'm glad to accommodate Miss Lawrence and the rest of ye, but of course, as you know, Jack, it breaks up his day's work, and this is a busy season on a farm like this. But as a rule he is through his chores at half-past six, and there's lots of sunlight after that."

I managed to get Wallace aside before we left the farmhouse. I told him of the club competition and of my desire to win the Harding trophy.

"Mr. Bishop tells me your time is your own after half-past six in the evening," I said. "Would you be willing to give me a few lessons after that hour? I will bring clubs and balls and meet you where we were this afternoon."

"I will tell you anything I know, Mr. Smith," he said, "but I fear I shall prove a poor instructor."

"I shall expect to pay for your time, Mr. Wallace, and if you can improve my drive you will find it worth your while," I said, glad of a chance to do something in an honourable way for a chap who certainly has not been favoured with his share of good fortune.

"If I accept pay I will become a professional golfer, will I not, Mr. Smith?" he asked, and for the life of me I did not know what to say.

"I would be willing to pay you five dollars a lesson," I said, ignoring his question, trusting that the figure named would outweigh scruples, if he really had any.

"It is more than I would take, though I thank you for the offer," he said. "I do not doubt that golf is an honourable profession--in fact I know it is--but for reasons which will not interest you I prefer to maintain my amateur standing. It will be a pleasure to play with you, sir, and to help your game if I can, but I would rather not accept money."

"Very well," I said, "I'll find some other way to repay you. Suppose I take the first lesson to-morrow evening?"

"To-morrow evening at half after six o'clock," he said, and we shook hands in parting to bind the agreement.

I had already formed a plan by which I could even matters without the direct passing of money. It strikes me as odd that this farmhand should object to becoming a professional golfer, but it tends to prove the accuracy of my original opinion that he is some college chap, probably of good family, who is at the end of his resources.

We had no sooner started from Bishop's than Miss Lawrence turned her batteries on me.

"You think you are very sly, do you not, Mr. Smith?" she began.

"In what way, Miss Lawrence?"

"You think to steal my golf instructor from me," she declared. "That is just like a man; they are the meanest, most selfish things ever created."

"Listen to me--"

"I did listen to you," declared that young lady with a triumphant laugh. "I did listen to you, and I have sharp ears. You are to have your first exclusive lesson to-morrow evening. I make the discovery that Mr. Wallace knows more of golf than all of you Woodvale boys together, and then you seek to monopolise his skill. That's what he did, girls, and he dare not deny it! What do you think of him?"

"Monster!" laughed Miss Harding, our fair chauffeuse on this return trip, raising her eyes for an instant to mine.

"Ingrate!" hissed Miss Ross, leaning forward from the tonneau.

"What shall we do with him?" demanded Miss Lawrence.

"Make him take us with him!" they chorused, and I assured them that nothing would give me more pleasure.

And thus it happened that Wallace acquired four pupils instead of one, and for three successive evenings we had a jolly time in the old sheep pasture taking our lessons from this most remarkable "hired man." We had to let Mr. Harding into the secret the second evening, but he promised not to "butt in" to our class, so he and Bishop sat on a side hill and smoked and laughed and seemed to enjoy the exhibition hugely.

These little excursions to the old sheep pasture excited increasing curiosity in the club. I enjoyed them immensely, since it gave me a chance to walk slowly home with Miss Harding.

After the first visit we discarded the auto, since its use threatened too much publicity. There was no real reason for keeping the affair a secret, except that it is a pleasure to hold an interest in a mystery, and I think most of us will confess to this harmless weakness. In addition I was steadily improving my short game, which has been my great handicap when pitted against Carter.

And besides, as I have noted, I enjoyed the companionship of Miss Harding--and, of course, that of the others of our little group.

I am of the opinion that LaHume followed and spied upon us on the occasion of our second trip, and very likely on the succeeding one. I am sure I saw someone raise his head above a scrubby knoll to the south, and am reasonably certain I recognized LaHume's gray cap. He was not about the club that evening until after our return, and the same thing happened on the following evening. His manner led me to believe he knew more than he cared to tell. He was sullen almost to the point of insolence.

After having been ignored once or twice by Miss Lawrence, LaHume left our little group on the veranda and pulled a chair to the side of Carter, who was reading his evening paper. It is not safe to interrupt Carter while thus engaged, but after LaHume said a few words the other laid aside the paper and listened intently. They talked for some time, and in view of what happened later I have an idea of the subject of their conversation.

Carter called me aside the next evening.

"I understand," he said, "that you have retained the services of a private golf tutor."

"Who told you that?" I was thunderstruck.

"Never mind who told me," laughed Carter. "Trying to steal a march on the rest of us, eh? Foxy old Smith; foxy old Smith!"

There was nothing I cared to say, and I said it.

"Is he any good?" Carter asked.

"Is who any good?" I parried.

"Wallace, of course. Oh, I know all about it. You, Miss Lawrence, Miss Ross, and Miss Harding have been taking lessons from Wallace for several evenings over in Bishop's sheep pasture. What I wish to know is this: does this Scotch chap of Bishop's really know anything about the game, or are the girls carried away with him because he is a handsome dog who has seen better days and is now playing in bad luck?"

"I cannot speak for the young ladies," I replied realising that I might as well tell the truth, "but I am smitten with the way he hits a ball, and also with his genius in explaining it to me. Carter, I tell you this fellow Wallace is a wonder!"

Carter was silent a moment.

"I wonder if he would like a job as golf professional?" he said.

"Golf professional?" I repeated. "Where?"

"Right here in Woodvale," declared Carter.

"To take Kirkaldy's place?"

"Yes, to take Kirkaldy's place. Kirkaldy handed me his resignation to-night to take effect on Saturday. A rich uncle has died in Scotland, and our young friend will buy his own golf balls in future, instead of winning them from you and me. Now you and I constitute the majority of the house committee, and if this Wallace is as good as you say, and I do not doubt your judgment in the least, what's the matter with offering him Kirkaldy's place? A man who can drive a dozen balls two hundred yards and tell how he does it is squandering his time and cheating humanity by serving as hired man."

I told him what Wallace said when I offered him money.

"That's all nonsense," declared Carter. "He can be a professional and return to the amateur ranks after he has gone into some other avocation. That is the rule not only here but in Great Britain. Kirkaldy can now become an amateur, and doubtless will. Get your hat and we'll go over and talk to this chap right now."

"How about LaHume?" I asked. LaHume is the third member of the house committee.

"Never mind about LaHume," laughed Carter. "I imagine there are reasons why LaHume might oppose the selection of Wallace, but if we are satisfied LaHume will have to be."

The Bishops had retired when we reached the old house, but Wallace came to the door, book in hand. Naturally he was surprised to see us at that hour, and he was even more surprised when Carter told him the object of our visit.

"We are not authorised to make you a definite offer to-night," said Carter. "I am chairman of the committee, and if you care to consider the matter seriously we suggest that you play a round with our present professional, Kirkaldy, to-morrow afternoon. If your work is satisfactory, as I have no doubt it will be from what Smith has said of you, the place is yours at the same salary and the same perquisites received by Kirkaldy."

"And what are these?" asked Wallace, a twinkle in his eye which I had noticed on several occasions. It was a peculiar combination of shrewdness, curiosity, and amusement, but one could not take offence at it. He certainly is an odd fish, and I like him even if I do not understand him.

"One hundred dollars a month with room and board, and all you can earn giving lessons," said Carter. "Kirkaldy averages three hundred dollars a month, and could have made more had he not been lazy."

"That certainly is a tempting chance for one who is getting twenty dollars a month," observed Wallace, after a long pause. "I like it here, and will not leave Mr. Bishop without due notice, but if you can obtain my release and can positively assure me that my amateur standing will not be impaired I will try to qualify for the position you offer. I don't mind telling you," he added, and I noticed the same odd twinkle in his eyes, "that there was a time, and I hope it will recur, when I thought much of playing the game in a non-professional capacity. That, however, is amongst ourselves, and if I become your professional I shall attend strictly to my business."

The following morning I saw Mr. Bishop, who informed me that Wallace had already related the purport of our visit the preceding evening.

"I'll tell you how I look at it, Jack," the old man said. "He's not an awful good hired man, but he's willin' and eager to learn, and has the makings of the best one in the county, but mor'n that he is a real gentleman, and good company for mother and me, and I hate like the mischief to lose him. But Lord bless ye, if he can make three hundred dollars a month teaching you fools how to hit a ball with a stick, why I ain't got no call to keep him here. That's as much money as I make out of this whole blamed farm, and I have to work and not play for a livin'. If Wallace is the man you want, take him, and I won't put a straw in his way. Only I hope you'll sorter hint to him that we'd take it kindly if he'd make it a point to drop over here once in a while and take supper with mother and me, and stay all night, if he'd care to. Will you do that, Jack?"

I heartily promised I would, and felt as guilty as if I had stolen some of Bishop's prize sheep. I went down the fields and told Wallace the old man had consented to release him, and that Kirkaldy would be on hand at the club to play a trial round at two o'clock.

I will describe that game and some other happenings in my next entry.

ENTRY NO. XIII

OUR NEW PROFESSIONAL

LaHume was furious when Carter and I told him Wallace was a candidate for Kirkaldy's place.

"What do you mean by taking this step without consulting me?" he blustered.

"We have not employed this chap yet," Carter calmly responded. "Don't get excited, Percy, Wallace may not make good."

"But who knows who he is?" demanded LaHume. "He may be the rankest kind of an impostor."

"A golf impostor?" smiled Carter. "I never heard of one. We can get a line on him before he has played five holes."

"I don't mean that," growled LaHume. "What I mean is that we don't know anything about this fellow. He comes with no recommendations, and all that sort of thing."

"If he can play within five strokes of Kirkaldy, and teach Smith how to keep from slicing, that's recommendation enough," remarked Carter. "What have you against him, Percy?"

"I'll vote against him in the committee," hotly declared LaHume, "and if I'm over-ruled I will appeal the matter to the club."

"Go as far as you like, my boy," drawled Carter, slowly adjusting his monocle and turning on his heel.

The news Kirkaldy had resigned and that "Bishop's hired man, Wallace," was to have a try out for his place spread rapidly, and created no end of comment and excitement.

When it was rumoured that the Misses Harding, Ross, and Lawrence--the three acknowledged beauties of the club--were his sponsors the interest was vastly increased.

Wallace appeared half an hour ahead of the appointed time, and I introduced him to Kirkaldy. The latter studied him intently as they chatted, but asked no questions concerning his identity with their native Scotland. Wallace looked over an array of clubs, selected some which suited him, but retained my cleek and mashie. It was agreed I should act as caddy for Wallace, Chilvers for Kirkaldy, and that Carter should referee. LaHume declined to act in any capacity.

All games were postponed to watch this strange contest, and the "gallery" clustered at the first tee numbered fully one hundred. It was agreed that the contest should be at medal play, the match score also to be taken into consideration.

Mr. Harding called me aside before the match started.

"What do you think about this game, Smith?" he asked. "You've seen both of them play, and I hav'n't. This young fellow, LaHume, is bluffing around offering to bet any part of five hundred dollars Kirkaldy will beat this Wallace seven strokes. I don't mind losing the money, but I hate to make a foolish bet and be laughed at."

"Take LaHume up, and I'll stand half the bet," I said, after considering the matter for a moment. "Wallace is a stranger to the course, but I doubt if Kirkaldy or anyone living can beat him seven strokes."

Harding covered LaHume's money, and the latter placed several hundred dollars more at the same odds. Miss Lawrence heard he was betting against Wallace, and her eyes blazed with indignation.

"You go to Mr. LaHume," she said to Marshall, "and ask him what odds he will give that Mr. Wallace does not win the game. Do not tell him who wishes to know."

"What odds Wallace does not win the game?" sneered LaHume, when Marshall sounded him. "Five to one, up to a thousand dollars!"

Just before they teed off, Marshall put a crisp one-hundred-dollar note belonging to Miss Lawrence in Harding's hands as stakeholder, and LaHume promptly covered it with five bills of the same denomination. There were scores of smaller wagers with no such animus back of them.

Wallace won the toss and took the honour. I doubt if there be any greater mental or nervous strain than that of making the initial stroke in an important golf contest. The player realises that all eyes are on him, and unless he has nerves of steel and an absolute mental poise he is likely to fall the victim of a wave which surges against him as he grasps the shaft of his club.

Wallace's first shot was the poorest I had seen him execute. It went high and to the left, and for a moment I was sure it would not clear the fence, but it did, dropping in as thick a clump of swamp grass as can be found in Woodvale. It left him fully one hundred and fifty yards from the cup. It was a most disappointing shot, and I instinctively turned and looked at LaHume.

That young gentleman was satisfied beyond measure. There was something vindictive and repellent in the satisfied expression of his face. I turned and watched Kirkaldy drive a beautiful ball within fifty yards of the cup. The first hole is two hundred and eighty-five yards from the tee.

I found Wallace's ball. It was on a soggy spot of ground, with tall slush grass in front of it, but luckily there was room to swing a club back of it. He studied it a moment intently. It was a villainous lie. I did not wish to give advice, but could not restrain myself.

"Better play safe," I said. "It will cost you only one stroke."

"I think I can take it out," he said, reaching in the bag for a heavy, old-fashioned lofting iron.

He took one glance at the green, and then came down on that ball as if he intended to drive it into the bowels of the earth. I saw nothing but a shower of mud and a huge divot hurled up by the club-head as the wrists relaxed to save breaking the shaft.

Others saw the ball as it flicked the tips of the menacing grass and soared high in the air. It struck on the near edge of the green.

"A bonny shot, mon; a guede clean shot as ere were made out thot muck!" exclaimed Kirkaldy, his face mantled with a grin of frank admiration.

It was a glorious recovery! Miss Lawrence was fairly dancing for joy. Kirkaldy laid his ball within a foot of the hole, and won it with a three against four for Wallace, the latter making bogey. Wallace is unable to explain how he made a fluke of that first shot, and I am sure I have no idea.

On the second hole both drove perfect balls over the old graveyard, but Wallace had a shade the best of it in distance and direction. Both were nicely on the green in two, and Wallace missed a putt for a three by a hair, while his opponent was lucky, running down in a long lag for four, halving it in bogey.

Timid players drive short on the third so as to avoid dropping in the brook, but both drove smashing balls far over it.

"I don't know much about this game," chuckled Harding, overtaking me at the foot-bridge, "but so far as I can see, this man of Bishop's isn't exactly what you folks call a duffer."

Both took this hole in bogey fours, and both drove the duck pond on the next hole, and we found their balls fair on the green, 220 yards away and slightly up hill. Wallace rimmed the cup for a two, and both made threes, one stroke better than bogey. It was lightning golf. LaHume's face was a study.

The fifth hole is 470 yards, and both were within easy chopping approach of the green on their second. Wallace had the worst of a bad kick, and Kirkaldy holed a thirty-foot putt for a par four, making him two up. LaHume smiled once again. The next four holes were made in bogey by both players, leaving Kirkaldy two up on both medal and match scores. Here is the out card:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	KIRKALDY--	3	4	4	3	4	5	5	5	4--	37
WALLACE---	4	4	4	3	5	5	5	5	4--	39									

This was three under bogey for Kirkaldy, and one under for Wallace.

"I think this Scotchman of yours will do," Carter said in an undertone, as we neared the tenth tee. "He is executing fairly well for a man playing a course for the first time, fixed up with a strange set of clubs, and getting all the worst of the luck on putts. He is actually outdriving Kirkaldy, but I'm afraid our friend Miss Lawrence will lose that hundred to Percy."

"So am I," I said, "but it is the only bet he will win."

It was at the tenth hole that Miss Lawrence sliced her ball over the fence, and Wallace deftly returned it, as I have mentioned. As he looked over the ground he identified it, and for the first time during the game he took a sweeping glance at the "gallery."

His eyes met those of Miss Lawrence, and I saw him make a gesture with his hand as if to remind her that this was the spot where he first had seen her. She answered with a smile and a nod, and then said something to Miss Harding and Miss Rose, at which the three of them laughed.

Then the machine-like Kirkaldy drove his usual accurate long ball.

It is a dangerous hole, this tenth, with a deep cut through which the country road runs to the right, and dense woods and rock-strewn underbrush to the left. The cautious player does not hazard making the narrow opening, but Wallace smashed that ball a full 250 yards as straight as a rifle shot. It is a 450-yard hole, and it has been the ambition of every player in the club to reach it in two. Kirkaldy had never done it, but Wallace had made a record-breaking drive. Could he reach the green?

Kirkaldy brassied and was short, but in good position. Wallace did not have a good lie, but I told him it was a full 200 yards, and the fore caddy gave him the direction. It was uphill almost all the way to the hole. He used a full brassie, going well into the turf, and I knew when the ball started it would reach the green.

We climbed the hill breathless with curiosity. I came in sight of the green. A new, white ball lay within a foot of the cup! All records on "Mount Terrible" had been shattered!

Kirkaldy smiled grimly and was short on his approach, but got down in two more, losing the hole with a five against that phenomenal three. Five is bogey and par for this hole, and sevens more common than fives. The medal score was even.

They halved the eleventh, Wallace won the twelfth and lost the fourteenth, both making threes on the tricky thirteenth. Wallace took the medal lead by winning the fifteenth in another perfect three, and the sixteenth produced fours for both of them. It was Kirkaldy's turn to register a three on the next, this bringing them to the last hole all square on medal score, with Kirkaldy one up on match play. It was intensely exciting!

The eighteenth hole is 610 yards. By wonderful long work both were on the green in three, but Kirkaldy was on the extreme far edge and away. His approach putt was too strong, overrunning the cup by twelve feet. Wallace laid his ball dead within six inches of the cup, and putted down in five, one under bogey. This insured him at least a tie for the medal score, but the match honours would go to Kirkaldy if he could hole that long putt. We held our breaths! He went to the left by a slight margin, halving the match by holes. Here is the card coming in:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	KIRKALDY--	5	4	6	3	4	4	4	3	6--	39
									WALLACE---	3	4	5	3	5	3	4	4	5-	36

Wallace therefore won the medal round by a score of 75 against 76 for Kirkaldy, and honours were even on holes. It was a match to make one's blood tingle; a clean, honest contest between two clear-headed and muscle-trained athletes.

Kirkaldy was the first to grasp Wallace's hand, and in the blue eyes of our tried and popular golf mentor there was naught but sincere goodwill and unaffected admiration.

"Ye'll do, my laddy, ye'll do!" Kirkaldy exclaimed. "I dinna ken who taught ye, but he was a guede mon; a guede mon!"

As Kirkaldy's ball stopped rolling, and it was known Wallace had won the medal score, the breathless gallery found their voices and gave vent to their feelings. The silent and motionless circle came to life, and, as it were, exploded toward its centre. We found ourselves in the vortex of cheering men, laughing girls, fluttering 'kerchiefs, and the excited clatter of a hundred voices.

I looked for LaHume and saw him stalking toward the club house. Someone clutched me by the sleeve, and I looked into the beautiful and happy eyes of Miss Lawrence.

"Wasn't it glorious!" she said. "Isn't he a splendid player! Did you ever see anything like that tenth hole? And I won! I just thought I should scream when Mr. Wallace lay dead for a five on this hole!"

"Say, he's all right, eh, Smith!" said Mr. Harding, handing me a roll of money. "Here's your share of the plunder. It was like picking it up in the street after a cyclone has hit a national bank. I'm going to blow mine in giving a dinner to Wallace and Kirkaldy, and everybody is invited."

We had that dinner, and right royally did we welcome the new and speed the parting professional. And this is how Tom Wallace, "Bishop's hired man," came to Woodvale as its golf professional.

After the dinner in honour of our professionals Kirkaldy made me a present of his famous driver. It is a beauty, and I confidently expect to lengthen my drive by at least ten yards with it. For the first time in my life I am now reasonably sure with my cleek shots. I do not know when I have been so well satisfied with my prospects.

My apparent stock losses to date foot up to \$202,000.



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ENTRY NO. XIV

MYSELF AND I

For an hour I have looked at the unsullied page of this diary. It amused me to turn back over its pages, but when I started to write the words would not come.

A liar is one who by direction or indirection seeks to deceive. The man who lies to an enemy is a diplomat; the man who lies to give harmless play to his imagination is an artist; the man who lies to his friends for the purpose of taking advantage of them is a scoundrel, and the man who lies to himself is a fool.

After re-reading this diary I am convinced that I belong in the last class.

I have been lying to myself for the past three weeks. With a smile on my lips I have looked myself in the eye and told the one falsehood over and over again. I have been the ass fondly to believe I told it with such detail and verisimilitude as to carry conviction to myself. I told it for the last time a few minutes ago.

My alter ego laughed in my face. I dislike to be jeered at, even by myself. I humbly apologised. I promised to reform and confess, and here is the confession:

I am in love. I have been in love for three weeks. It is not necessary to say with whom, since I and myself both know, but in order that the crimes of evasion and equivocation may no longer be charged against me, I frankly record that I am in love with Grace Harding!

There you have it, John Henry Smith! Head it over carefully. Does that suit you? With it goes my humble apology. Does not this constitute the amende honorable? What did you say? Ah, it does! Good Shake hands, old fellow! Now let's sit quietly down and talk this matter over, and see how we stand. I wish you to help me.

The situation is slightly less complicated. It is settled that I am in love with Grace Harding. What's that? "_We_" are in love with Grace Harding," you say. Very well, old fellow, have it your own way. You are the only one in the world with whom I shall refuse to become jealous. They say that two heads are better than one, even if one is a blockhead--meaning me, of course.

We are in love with Grace Harding. Well, what if I did say it before? I like to keep on saying it. It's the best thing I have written since I started this stupid diary. _We_ are in love with Grace Harding.

When you come to think of it, John, we cannot take any great amount of credit for that. It is not startling, and I'm awfully afraid it is not original. Now, as I look at it, it would be much more remarkable if I--I beg your pardon, John Henry Smith--it would be much more remarkable if we were _not_ in love with Grace Harding. Did you ever think of that?

Falling in love with Grace Harding was the easiest thing we ever did, Smith, and you know it. We are entitled to no more credit for it than for admiring one of those glorious sunsets, when the eye is ravished by blended and ever-changing tints of cloud, sky, and enchanted landscape. We do not boast, Smith, that we love the songs of the birds, or the graceful bend of the willow as it yields to the summer's breeze; we do not call attention to our worship of the early morn, when the dew sparkles like swarming diamonds on grass and flower, and bridal veils of mist float over the breasts of the hills.

We loved her, Smith, from the moment she dawned upon us the day her father made that wonderful drive. We loved her while she was playing that first game of golf--and now we can talk frankly with each other, I will confess I never saw a woman play worse than she did that day. But the fact that our admiration grew during every moment of that weird and wonderful exhibition of how not to hit a ball, proves we were in love. You never denied it, you say? I know you didn't; and it's to your credit.

But does she love us, Smith? You don't know? Of course you don't know, but what do you think about it? You hope, she does, you say. Smith you're as stupid as I am! Certainly you hope she does, and so do I, but have you any reason to believe she does? Why don't you say something?

"She is pleasant to us, smiles at us, and seems to enjoy our society," you say. Well, what of it? What does that prove? I could say the same thing of Miss Ross, Miss Dangerfield, and even of Miss Lawrence. I am not so conceited as to imagine these charming girls are in love with us because they laugh, smile, and seem to be pleased at our attempts to entertain them.

Carter could make claim that Miss Harding was in love with him on the same plea. And speaking of Carter, I should like your opinion of him. I'll tell you frankly I don't like the way he acts.

Mind you, Smith, I'm not going to say anything against Carter, and I shall not permit you to. Carter has as much right to fall in love with Grace Harding as we have, and for that matter I'm afraid he has more claim in that direction. If you will recollect, it was Carter who introduced us to Miss Harding.

I have no idea when and where he met her. Carter is a chap who attends to his own affairs and who does not permit others to interfere in them. It is not likely he will tell us, and I shall never ask him.

Mr. Harding sometimes calls him "Jim." That goes to prove that Carter has known the Hardings for a long time. Harding once spoke of knowing Carter's father.

That is not what worries me. It is Carter's air and whole attitude which puts me on guard. Carter must know, John Henry Smith, that we pay an unusual amount of attention to Miss Harding, and sometimes I almost imagine he has surmised what I have confessed to you, but it does not seem to annoy or concern him in the least. It is as if he knew just how far we can go. It strikes me as the confidence bred of assured supremacy, but, of course, I may be in error, and sincerely hope I am, for your sake as well as mine.

Carter and Miss Harding are much together. They take long walks, and both seem very happy in one another's company.

I stumbled across them last evening while looking for a lost ball in the old graveyard. They were on a scat under a weeping willow tree, and were sitting very close together. Carter was reading something and she was looking over his shoulder. They were laughing when they looked up and saw me poking about in the grass with my club.

"Hello, Smith!" drawled Carter, looking at me through that monocle of his. "Lost your ball? How many times must I tell you that the proper way to play this hole is to drive over this sacred spot and not into it?"

Miss Harding drew slightly away from him when she saw me--at least I imagined so--and smiled and looked innocent as could be.

What I am getting at, John Henry Smith, is this: We would not dare ask Miss Harding to sit with us in such a lonely and secluded spot, and I think we would have been more embarrassed than was Carter at so unexpected an interruption. It simply goes to prove that--well, I don't know just what it does prove.

Chilvers told me a year ago he had heard Carter was engaged to be married to a very pretty and immensely wealthy girl. I did not think much of it at the time, having only passing interest in whether Carter married or remained single. The other day I asked Chilvers if he had heard anything more about Carter's engagement, and he looked at me rather oddly and said he had not. He said his wife might know something about it, and advised me to ask her or Carter.

Suppose they were engaged, John Henry Smith? That would settle it, you say. You quit too easily. If you desert me in this extremity I shall go ahead on my own account. I love her; I must have her! Let Carter fall in love with someone else!

For some malignant reason this man Carter has persistently stood between me and the realisation of my cherished ambitions. He has won cup after cup and medal after medal which would have fallen to me were it not for his devilish combination of skill and luck. But he shall not thwart my love! He shall not; I swear it; he shall not! Smile, John Henry Smith, you do not love her as I do.

"Why should she fall in love with me, or wish to marry me? What have I done in the world, or what do I expect to do which will compel that admiration and respect which is the basis of true love?"

Those are harsh questions, John Henry Smith. I tell you I love her; is not that sufficient? She is not the woman to weigh a man in the same scales with his money, his miles of railroad track, and such material assets. I would love her if her father were still a section boss.

And I am going to do something in this world. I propose to show you, John Henry Smith, that I can do something beside play golf. Am I not doing something now? Am I not risking practically every dollar I have in the world on my business judgment? Call it gambling if you will; if so, it is big gambling. The man who wins must take chances. Mr. Harding did not become a railway magnate by remaining a section boss. He is a commanding figure in Wall Street. I shall be that and more.

Laugh if you will, John Henry Smith; I mean every word of it!

What does Carter do? He has not done a stroke of work in five years. He says a man with an income of \$100,000 a year has no right to work and strive to increase it. I claim a man should do something to make a name for himself, and leave a record of which his children and grand-children will be proud. You watch me, John Henry Smith! I'll show you and Miss Harding that I can do something beside play golf.

We have wandered from our subject. The question is this: what shall we do in order to ascertain if Miss Harding entertains toward us any sentiment stronger than friendship? Ask her, you say. Suppose you ask her. No, my dear John Henry, that is not the proper step at this time.

I do not set myself up as an authority in matters of love, but I do hold that no wise man ever proposed to a good and true woman without knowing in advance that she would accept him. Love has its secret code, and Nature gives the key to its discerning votaries. I have that key, John Henry Smith.

One need not speak or write in order to send the first timid messages of love; and by the same token the recipient need not even frown in order to tenderly reject the proffered passion. There are as many words in this unwritten and unspoken vocabulary of love as may be found in lexicons. Did you know that, John Henry?

The man who fails to avail himself of this silent but eloquent language, and who stupidly assaults a woman with an avowal of an alleged love, deserves to be coldly rejected. It is as much of an insult or an indiscretion as to walk unheralded and unbidden into a private room. Never do it, John Henry!

If a man becomes convinced he loves a woman he should tell her by some message in the code which both understand. He will know if she receives it. It is not necessary that she answer, "yes." If she answer not at all he has achieved a notable victory, but

if she promptly signals a decided "no" he has met with irreparable defeat. That settles it, my dear Smith.

A woman may refuse a man with words, and he be justified in declining to accept the implied rejection, but there is no appeal from the silent decision which leaps from the heart.

So long as no message comes back unopened keep on sending them. You are justified in assuming that they have been read and are being entertained. The time will come, John Henry, when you will get your answer. If it is against you, accept it with the best grace you can command. Do not be the fool to think her lips will veto her heart.

If, on the contrary, there comes the glad day when over the throbbing unseen wire there comes a telepagram sounding the letters "Y-E-S," proceed with the sweet formality of a verbal avowal of your love, and you will not be disappointed.

Smile if you will, John Henry Smith, you know I have told the truth.

We have sent a few of these messages to Miss Harding, and thus far none have been returned unopened. As you say, John Henry, they have been very timid ones, and possibly are so vague she does not think them worth even a decided negative. We will send more emphatic ones; not too emphatic, mind you, but couched in symbols which cannot be misunderstood.

That is our best plan, John Henry Smith, don't you think so? I am glad we agree at last. As yet nothing has happened of a character positively discouraging.

Carter? I wish you would not mention his name. From this on we will ignore Carter.

I intended to write of our automobile trip, but the hour is late and I must postpone it until some other time. Good night, John Henry Smith!

ENTRY NO. XV

THE AUTO AND THE BULL

I started to tear out what I wrote last night, but on second thought will let it remain. Its perusal in future years may amuse me. I will now resume the trail of Woodvale happenings.

The touring car won from her father by Miss Harding is a massive and beautiful machine. Luckily I am familiar with the mechanism of this particular make, and, as a consequence, am called in for advice when any trifling question arises. Harding scorns a professional chauffeur.

"Next to running one of these road engines," he declares, "the most fun is in pulling them apart to see how they are made. I would as soon hire a man to eat for me as to shawf one of these choo-choo cars."

Shortly after the big machine arrived Mr. Harding received a letter from a gentleman named Wilson, who is spending the summer at the Oak Cliff Golf and Country Club. Wilson challenged him to come to Oak Cliff and play golf, and to bring his family and a party of friends with him. Harding read the letter and laughed.

"Here's my chance to win a game," he declared. "I can't beat the Kid, but I'll put it all over Wilson, you see if I don't."

"Don't be too sure, papa," cautioned Miss Harding.

"Wilson only started golf this year, and the only game he can beat me at is hanging up pictures," insisted Harding. "He stands six-foot-four, and weighs about one hundred and fifty. He looks like a pair of compasses, but he's all right, and we must go up and see him. Do you know the road, Smith?"

"Every foot of it."



"How far is it?"

"About forty miles."

"Good!" declared the magnate. "I'll wire Wilson we'll be there to-morrow. We'll fill up the buzz wagon, take an early start, and put in a whole day at it. Smith shall be chief shawfer, and the Kid and I will take turns when he gets tired."

And we did. We started at seven o'clock with a party consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Harding, Miss Harding, Chilvers and his wife, Miss Dangerfield, Carter, and myself.

There are many hills intervening and some stretches of indifferent road, but we figured we should make the run in two hours or less--but we didn't.

The few early risers gave us a cheer as we rolled away from the club house and careened along the winding path which leads to the main road. The dew yet lay on the grass, and little lakes of fog hung over the fair green. It was a perfect spring morning, and the ozone-charged air had an exhilarating effect as we cleaved through it.

Miss Harding was in the seat with me. I don't imagine this exactly pleased Carter, but it suited me to a dot. My lovely companion was in splendid spirits.

"Now, Jacques Henri," she said to me in French, pretending that I was a professional chauffeur, "you are on trial. Unless you show marked proficiency we shall dispense with your services."

"And if I do?" I inquired.

"Then you may consider yourself retained," she laughed.

"For life?" I boldly asked.

I was so rattled at this rather broad insinuation that I swung out of the road and struck a rut, which gave the car a thorough shaking.

"If that's the way you drive you will be lucky if you're not discharged before we reach Oak Cliff," Miss Harding declared, and I did not dare look in her eyes to see if she were offended or not.

For the following minutes I attended strictly to business. The steering gear and other operating parts were a bit stiff on account of newness, but I soon acquired the "feel" of them, **and we ate up the first ten miles in seventeen minutes.**

We were following a sinuous brook toward its source, now skirting its quiet depths along the edge of reedy meadows, and then chasing it into the hills where it boiled and complained as it dashed and spumed amid rocks and boulders.

"Hold on there, Smith!" shouted Harding from the rear seat in the tonneau.

"Stop, Jacques Henri!" ordered my fair employer, and then I dared look into her smiling eyes.

"I want to cut some of those willow switches," explained Harding, as the car stopped.

"What do you want of willow switches, John?" asked Mrs. Harding.

"Going to make whistles out of them," he said, cutting several which sprouted out from the edge of a spring. "Besides they're good things to keep the flies from biting the tonneau. Smith runs so slow that they are stealing a ride."

"Defend me," I said to my employer.

"Jacques Henri is doing as he is told," declared Miss Harding.

The spring was so inviting that we sampled its clear, cold water. Harding in the meantime whittling industriously on his willow switch. When he found that his whistle would "blow" he was as pleased as if he had designed a new type of locomotive.

A mile farther on we passed sedately through a country village and aroused the fleeting interest of the loungers in front of the combined post-office and news store. Then we entered a fine farming country, and from it plunged into a forest so dense that the overhanging boughs almost spanned our pathway.

Moss-covered stone walls lined both sides of the road. Everywhere was a profusion of wild flowers, their petals brushing against our tires, and their flaunting reds, yellows, and blues brightening the gloom of the encompassing wood. A gray squirrel scampered across our path and impudent chipmunks chattered to right and left. And then we came to a small clearing filled with the wagons, tents and litter of a gipsy camp.

"Let's stop and have our fortunes told!" cried Miss Dangerfield, but my employer vetoed that proposition. It was a vivid flash of colour. The brightly painted wagons with their canvas tops, the red-shirted men, black of hair and eyes, olive of skin, and graceful in their laziness; the older women bare-headed, bent of shoulder, and brilliantly shrouded in shawls; the younger women straight as arrows, bold and keen of glance, and decked in ribbons and jewelry, and on every hand swarms of gipsy children, more or less clothed. The blue smoke of their camp-fires twisted through the dark green of the fir trees in the background.

Again the forest closed upon us. The grade became steeper, and in places our road had been blasted through solid rock. And then we reached the summit of this ridge, and like a flash the superb panorama of the Hudson burst upon us. At our feet lay the broad bosom of the Tappan Zee, its waters glistening in the sunlight, the spires of a village in the foreground, and the distance blue-girt with cliffs, hills, and mountains.

I have seen it a thousand times, but it is ever new.

"Stop; Jacques Henri!" commanded Miss Harding, and I stopped.

"What's the matter?" asked Harding. "Something busted?"

"We're going to sit right here a minute or more and admire this," declared Miss Harding.

"Great; isn't it?" admitted Harding. "Who owns it, Smith? Does it cost anything to look at it?"

"Not a penny," I said.

"First time I've got something for nothing since I struck New York," was the comment of that gentleman.

Four or five miles across the Tappan Zee the blue of the mountain was splattered with the white of straggling houses. To the left was a checker-board of farms, an area hundreds of square miles in extent basking in the rays of a cloudless sun. Yet beyond, the Orange mountains lifted their rounded slopes. To the south was the grim line of the Palisades, blue-black save where trees clung to their steep sides. On the north Hook Mountain dipped its feet into the Hudson, and to our ears came the dull boom of explosions where vandals are blasting away its sides and ruining its beauty.

"Right over there," said Carter, pointing toward Piermont, "is where André landed when he crossed the river on the mission to Benedict Arnold which ended in his capture and death. Beyond the mountain is the monument which marks the spot where he met with what our school books term 'an untimely fate.'"

"A short distance to the south," I added, "is the old house where Washington made his headquarters during the most discouraging years of the Revolution, and in which he and Rochambeau planned the campaign which ended with the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. And not far away is 'Sleepy Hollow,' where Washington Irving lived, wrote, and died."

"Yes, yes," contributed Chilvers, "and on this sacred soil there now is bunched a cluster of millionaires, any one of whom could pay the entire expense of the War of the Revolution as easily as I can settle for a gas bill."

We had not noticed Harding, who suddenly appeared in front of the machine with his driver and a handful of golf balls.

"The future historian will record," he declared, "that from this spot Robert L. Harding drove a golf ball into that pond below!"

"Suppose you can, Robert," observed his wife, "what earthly good will it do you, and what will it prove?"

"It will prove that I can drive one of these blamed things into that pond," he grinned. "I've got to break into history some way."

On the fifth trial he had the satisfaction of driving a ball into that pond. It was not much of a drive, but it pleased him immensely.

"I got my money's worth out of those five balls," he declared as he climbed back into the car.

"See how the sun strikes the sail of that schooner!" exclaimed Miss Harding. "And how it glances from the brass work of those yachts at anchor! There goes an auto boat darting through a swarm of sail boats like a bird through fluttering butterflies. It is a glorious view from here!"

"It makes the Rhine look like counterfeit money," asserted Chilvers, whose similes usually are grotesque. "Any time you hear an American raving over the wonderful scenery of Europe you can place a bet that he has never seen that of his own country."

"That's right, Chilvers," said Harding. "We have all kinds of scenery out West that has never been used. It's a drug in the market, laying around out-of-doors for the first one that comes along."

We made the next ten miles at a rapid gait through one of the finest country-residence sections in this fair land of ours. Then we entered a sparsely settled agricultural district. We were opposite a meadow which recently had been mowed. It was a gentle slope with picturesque rocks flanking its sides, and near the road was a pond.

"Whoa there, Smith!" shouted Harding. I jammed on brakes and turned to see what was the matter.

"What is it, papa?" asked Miss Harding.

"This is just the place I've been looking for," he said, standing and surveying the meadow with the eye of an expert.

"What for?"

"To paste a ball in," he asserted, reaching for his clubs.

"Drive ahead, Jacques Henri!" ordered my charming employer. "Papa Harding, we're not going to stop every time you see a place where you wish to drive a ball!"

"Just this once, Kid," pleaded her father. "Let me soak a few balls out there, and I won't say another word until we get to Oak Cliff. Be good, Grace, we've got lots of time."

"Very well," she consented, looking at her watch. "We'll wait ten minutes for you."

"Here's where I get some real practice," he said, arming himself with a driver and a box of balls. "Come on, Chilvers, you and Carter help me chase 'em."

"Robert Harding, you are hopeless!" declared his good wife. "You have become a perfect golf crank."

"Let me alone," he grinned, as he climbed the fence. "I'm on my vacation. Keep your eyes on this one, boys!"

Before we started from Woodvale he declared that it was all nonsense to take along a change of clothes, and he was dressed in that wonderful costume, plaids, red coat and all.

We lay back in our seats and smilingly watched his efforts. He has shown signs of improvement recently, and is imbued with the enthusiasm of the novice who realises that his practice has counted for something.

He drove the first half-dozen balls indifferently, but the next one was really a good one.

"There was a beaut!" he exclaimed, turning to us as the ball disappeared with a bound over the crest of the slope. "What's the matter with you folks? Why don't you applaud when a man makes a good shot?"

"That's balls enough, papa, dear," said Miss Harding. "By the time you have found them your time will be up."

"Right you are, Kid," he admitted. "I'm proud of that last one, and I'm going to pace it. Help me pick 'em up, boys, I'll drive 'em back, and then we'll go on."

He started to pace the distance of the longer ball, counting as he strode along. When he reached the crest of the slope we could hear him droning, "one hundred twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three," etc. Carter was hunting for the balls to the right and Chilvers for those to the left.

The red coat and plaid cap disappeared over the hill. Miss Dangerfield was chattering about something, I know not what. I was looking at Miss Harding, and did not hear her.

I did hear some sound which resembled distant thunder. A moment later I saw the top of that plaid cap bob above the hill. Then I saw the shoulders of that red coat, and the huge figure of the railroad magnate fairly shot into view.

He was running as fast as his stout legs would carry him, waving his club and occasionally looking quickly to his rear.

I knew in an instant what was the matter.

"What is papa running for?" exclaimed Miss Harding. That question was speedily answered.

"Run! Run, boys!" he yelled as he plowed down that slope. "Run like hell; he's after us!"

Carter and Chilvers took one glance and the three of them came tearing down that hill.

There came into view the lowered head and humped shoulders of a Holstein bull close on the trail of the lumbering millionaire. The women screamed.

"He will be killed; he will be killed!" moaned Mrs. Harding. "Oh, do something to save him, Mr. Smith; please do something!"

I am rather proud of my generalship at that critical moment. I have a certain amount of wit in an emergency, and luckily it did not fail me. It is not an easy matter to head off an enraged bull in an open field, but I saw a chance and took it.

I grasped Miss Harding and fairly threw her to the ground.

"Jump! Jump!" I yelled to the others.

Mrs. Chilvers and Miss Dangerfield instantly obeyed, but Mrs. Harding was too terrified to comprehend my orders. Her eyes were fixed on her husband, and she neither saw nor heard me. There was not a second to lose.

I swung that heavy touring-car in a backward curve, so as to face the fence over which Mr. Harding had climbed. Turning on full speed I headed for it.

The powerful machine quivered for the fraction of a second and then leaped from the roadway. There was a crash of splintered fence posts and boards, a glimpse of flying lumber, and we were in the meadow.

It takes some time to tell this, but it was not long in happening. When we went through that fence Harding was probably seventy yards away and to our left. The bull was not twenty feet back of him and gaining rapidly at every jump. I saw nothing of Carter or Chilvers.

Harding had dropped his club and was running desperately. I feared every moment that he would fall. He was headed for the pond, but never would have reached it.

"Drop down! Drop down!" I shouted to Mrs. Harding.

We went over a hummock where a drain-pipe had been laid and I thought we were done for. The shock hurled Mrs. Harding to the floor. Beyond that point the ground was hard and fairly smooth and our speed became terrific.

The distance between the bull and his intended victim had decreased to so small a space that I despaired of cutting him off. I cannot tell exactly what happened. I only know that I kept my eye on that bull as religiously as one attempts to obey the golf mandate, "keep your eye on the ball."

Then I struck the bull.

I caught him with the left of the front of the car. The collision was at an angle of about thirty degrees, I should say. I missed Harding by not more than six feet. I presume we were travelling at a rate of a mile a minute, and that bull certainly was going one-third that fast.

As the front of the machine was upon the animal I ducked, but did not release my firm grip on the steering-wheel. There was photographed on my brain an impression of a shaggy head, short and sharp horns, rage-crazed eyes, a wet nose and lolling tongue, of turf cast up by flying hooves, of a bearded face with staring eyes, of a red coat and a bewildering plaid--and then the machine was upon them.

The shock of the collision was so slight that I feared I had missed my target. I shut off the power and swung sharply to the right. One glance proved that Mrs. Harding was uninjured.

Two objects were on the ground over which I had passed, and Carter and Chilvers were running toward them. Had I struck Harding? I suffered agonies in those moments, and I was the first to reach his side.

As I sprang from the car he raised to a sitting posture and attempted to speak, but it was impossible to do so. Before Mrs. Harding could reach him he was on his feet, making gestures to indicate that he was not hurt.

"He's all right!" shouted Chilvers, rushing up to us. "Don't be alarmed, Mrs. Harding, he only stumbled and fell. He's winded but will catch his breath in a minute!"

Mr. Harding panted, and between gasps bowed and made pantomimic signs to indicate that Chilvers had correctly diagnosed his ailment.

His wife has too much sense to give way to her emotions at such a time. She brushed his clothes and wiped the perspiration from his face. Miss Harding and the others were on the scene before his voice came back to him.

"I'm--all--right!" he declared with much effort, walking and swinging his arms to prove it to himself and us. Then he shook hands with me, and I noted that his violent exercise had not impaired the strength of his grip. We walked over and looked at the dead bull.

"That was a good shot, Smith," he said. "That was great work. Do you know how close you came to hitting me?"

"It was very close, but I had one eye on you," I replied.

"I honestly believe it was the rush of air from the machine that keeled me over, but I was about done for. I doubt if I would have made that pond."

"Governor," said Chilvers, "he would have nailed you in two more jumps. That was as pretty a piece of interference as I ever saw."

There was not a mark on the dead animal, whose neck must have been broken.

"When you struck him," said Chilvers, "the air was full of surprised beef. That bull went at least twelve feet in the air, and he never moved after he came down. It was a glancing shot, and you could not have done better, Smith, if you made a hundred trials."

"Once is enough for me," I said.

I turned my attention to the automobile, and as I started toward it Miss Harding intercepted me.

"That was very brave of you, Jacques Henri," she said, offering both of her hands. "You are an excellent chauffeur, and we all thank you."

"Don't praise me too much or I shall be tempted to demand an exorbitant salary," I declared. "I'm glad I had the sense to think of it in time. Let's see if much damage was done to the machine."

It was a happy moment for John Henry Smith, and I would tackle a bull every day under the same circumstances if I knew that there was waiting for me the reward of such a glance from those eyes and the clasp of those little hands.

The forward lamps were smashed beyond repair and several rods were slightly bent, but aside from these trifles I could not see that any damage had been done. Mr. Harding and the others joined us.

"I suppose somebody owns that bull," he said. "Do you happen to know who runs this farm, Smith?"

I had no idea. There was no farmhouse in sight, and Harding was in a quandary. He thought a moment and then produced one of his cards.

"Write this for me, Smith. My hand is too shaky. Let's see," and then he dictated the following: "_While playing golf I was attacked by this bull. Send bill for bull to Woodvale Club_."

"I should say that was all right," he said, reading it carefully. "It is short and does not go into unnecessary details."

We tied the card to the animal's horns, and I have an idea the owner of that unfortunate beast will be mystified to account for the fate which befel him. Having repaired the fence as best we could we resumed our journey to Oak Cliff, and Mr. Harding was content to remain in his seat until we reached there.

Chilvers attempted to explain to Harding and the rest of us that the collision between the auto and the bull resulted in "pulled or hooked shot," the bull taking the place of a golf ball and the machine serving as the face of the driver. It is quite accurate as showing the relative positions of the various factors, but I should not term it an art product.

"I am familiar with the road from here to Oak Cliff," said Miss Harding when we had gone a mile or so. "You may rest, Jacques Henri, and I'll take your place."

She did so, and handled the big car with the skill of an expert. I did not talk to her for fear of distracting her attention from the task she had assumed. I was contented to watch her, to be near her and to know that I had had the rare good fortune to do an unexpected turn for one who was near and dear to her.

I will tell of our day in Oak Cliff in my next entry.



ENTRY NO. XVI

MISS HARDING OWNS UP

"I Demand part of my payment this afternoon," I said to Miss Harding as we neared the Oak Cliff club house.

"You are impatient, Jacques Henri," she laughed. "Is it possible my credit is not good?"

"Not in this instance," I returned. "I am demanding that you refuse all invitations to play in foursomes, and that after luncheon you and I make the round of Oak Cliff."

"That is so modest a request that I grant it," she said, and ten minutes later I had the satisfaction of hearing her decline Carter's invitation to join in a foursome in which I was to take no part. **This proves not only that all is fair in love, but that victory favours the one who strikes the first blow.**

It was about ten o'clock when we reached Oak Cliff, and found Mr. Wilson waiting for us. Harding was impatient to test his skill against Wilson, and the two were ready to play when the rest of us were still chatting with Mrs. Wilson and others of their party.

"We are entitled to a gallery," declared Harding. "Come on, everybody, and watch me show Wilson how this game should be played."

Most of us accepted this invitation. Mr. Wilson fits the description Harding had given of him. He is wonderfully tall and slim, and I doubted if he had much skill as a golfer. His smooth-shaven features and dreamy eyes were those of the poet, but he is one of the best bankers and business men in the country.

Harding drove a fairly straight ball but Wilson promptly sliced into the tall grass. Miss Harding and I helped him search for his ball, and Chilvers joined in the hunt.

"Ah, this is very lucky!" exclaimed Mr. Wilson, bending his long frame over some object.

"Found your ball?" asked Chilvers.

"The ball? No, no," he said, coming to his feet with something in his hand which looked to me like a weed. "But I've found a rare specimen of the *_Articum Lappa_*. It is a beauty!"

"Looks sort of familiar," said the puzzled Chilvers. "What did you say it was?"

"The *_Articum Lappa_*, more commonly called the burdock," explained Mr. Wilson.

"If you can't find your ball drop another one and play!" shouted Harding from the other side of course. Just then I discovered the ball, and after two strokes Wilson got it out of trouble, and then by a lucky approach and putt won the hole. Harding looked at him suspiciously.

On the next hole their drives landed the balls not far apart and neither was in trouble.

"I'm afraid this man Wilson can beat me," Harding said to us in an undertone as we neared the balls.

"Don't lose your nerve, papa," cautioned his daughter.

Wilson was away, but when he was within a few yards of his ball he looked intently at the turf and then dropped to his knees and crawled slowly around.

"What are you looking for?" exclaimed Harding "There's your ball right in front of you."

"I know it," calmly said Wilson, running his hand over the turf, "but I'm curious to know what kind of *_Trifolium_* this is."

"Wilson," said the magnate, as the former rose to his full height and took a club from his bag, "Wilson, I might as well quit and give up this game."

"Why?" asked the surprised banker.

"Let me tell you something," declared Harding. "I only took up this golf business a few weeks ago, and by hard work have found out about mashies, hooks, fozzles, cops, one off two and all those difficult things, but I'm blamed if I ever heard of trifoliums, or whatever you call 'em, and you can't ring 'em in on me. I won't stand for it! We don't play trifoliums in Woodvale, do we, Smith?"

"But my dear Harding," interposed Wilson, his mobile face wrinkled in a smile, "_Trifolium_ is not a golf term and has nothing whatever to do with the game."

"What in thunder is it?"

"_Trifolium_ is the genus name for the clover plant, and these are beautiful specimens," explained this amateur botanist.

"It is, is it?" laughed Harding. "Well, let's see how far you 'can knock that ball out of that bed of _Trifoliums_."

We left them soon after and returned to the club house. The ladies did not care to play before luncheon, preferring to take a rest after the exciting experiences of the trip from Woodvale. I ran across an old friend of mine, Sam Robinson, and he and I played against Carter and Chilvers. Robinson is one of the best amateurs in the country and we defeated our opponents handily.

It was a merry party which gathered about the table which had been spread under the trees near the club house. Oak Cliff is the only club which Woodvale recognises as a rival, and the Wilson's entertained us charmingly. Mr. Harding was in great spirits.

"I won!" he announced as he returned with our elongated and smiling host. "Licked Wilson, trifoliums and all, right here on his own ground! But he found a _Rumex_ and a lot of other weeds, so he don't care."

Miss Harding and I had discovered an oil painting in the club library which interested us, and when coffee and cigars had been served I asked Mr. Wilson about its history.

"Robinson gave it to the club," he said, "he can tell its story better than I can."

"It's an odd sort of a yarn," began Robinson. "Last fall an artist friend of mine of the name of Powers wrote a letter inviting me to come and spend a few weeks with him in a camp he had established on the upper waters of the Outrades River in northeastern Quebec. He was there sketching and loafing, and I took my golf clubs and went. While he painted I batted balls around a cleared space in the forest, fished, hunted and had so much fun that we stayed there until cold weather set in. Then we loaded up a boat and started down the river with a guide."

"One evening we came to an island with rapids below it. We had to portage around these rapids, so we decided to camp for the night. It was cold, and rapidly growing colder, but Powers insisted in making a trip to that island, the beauty of its rocks fascinating his artistic soul. We emptied the boat and he pulled across the swift current. Ten minutes later we heard him yell. His boat had drifted from where he thought he had moored it, and had been dashed to pieces in the rapids below. The guide declared that there was no way to reach him without a boat, and that he would have to go back twenty miles to a lumber camp for one. We explained this to Powers, and told him to light a fire and make the best of it until morning. The current was so swift that no swimmer could breast it. It was already down to zero."

"Powers searched his pockets," continued Robinson, "and made the startling announcement that he did not have a match. Without a fire he surely would freeze before the guide could return. He was dancing up and down on a rock and swinging his arms to keep warm."

"He certainly was in a bad fix," interrupted Harding. "Was there no way to get at him?"

"Absolutely none," continued Robinson. "The sun was sinking--when I had an idea. In the bottom of my golf bag were four badly hacked and split balls. I called to Powers to keep his nerve. The balls were rubber-cored, and I widened the crack in one of them and gouged out a space in the rubber. In this I put the heads of three matches, teed the ball on the beach, called to Powers what I had done and told him to keep his eye on the ball. I hit it clean and fair, but a trail of smoke told that the concussion had

ignited the matches. The ball fell in the underbrush a few yards from Powers, and he almost cried when he took out the charred match heads."

"How far was it?" asked Harding.

"I paced it later and found it to be about one hundred and forty yards," said Robinson.

"You paced it?" exclaimed Harding. "You're a bit mixed on this story, Robinson, aren't you?"

"Not at all," laughed that gentleman. "You wait and I'll explain. Then I fixed another ball and wrapped the match heads in surgeon's cotton. I popped that ball in the air. The next one was pulled, struck a rock and bounded into the water. One remained, and it was a critical moment. I was numbed with the cold, it was almost dark, and I had to make a shot for a man's life, but I made it. It went far and true and struck in the branches of a fir tree over Power's head. He did not see it, but he heard it. Then began a search for a lost ball. It was pitch dark half an hour later when Powers shouted that he had found it, and soon after we yelled like madmen when a tiny yellow flame curled up from the island. Powers asked me to drive a ham sandwich across, but I did not attempt it. The guide started back after another boat, and Powers and I spent the long hours over our respective bonfires in an effort to keep from freezing."

"It dropped to twenty-five below zero before morning, and when daybreak came I went down to the beach. The water still flowed swift and black directly across, but when I looked to the north I found that the ice extended from the shore to the upper end of the island. I put several sandwiches in my pocket and carefully walked across. Powers was trying to cook some freshwater clams when I came upon his bonfire."

"That is as much of the story as you will be interested in," concluded Robinson.

"Powers kept the ball which saved his life, and in return gave me that oil painting depicting the scene at nightfall as I was driving that last ball."

"It's a good thing for your friend Powers that it was not up to me to drive that last ball," declared Harding. "That story is all right, Robinson, and the picture proves it."

As we were leaving the table Mrs. Chilvers called me aside.

"Have you made up a game for this afternoon?" she asked, and I thought I discerned a mischievous glance in her eyes.

"Why--why, yes," I hesitated, wondering if I were to be dragged into some wretched foursome. "I have arranged to play with Miss Harding."

"What, again?" she asked.

"This is only my third game with her," I declared.

"Ah, Mr. Smith, do you remember how I warned you several weeks ago?"

I remembered but did not admit it.

"I told you then that some time you would meet a golfing Venus," she said triumphantly, and without waiting for me to make a defense left and joined Miss Dangerfield.

Miss Harding and I waited until we had a clear field ahead of us before we began our game. It was one of the perfect early summer afternoons when it is a delight to live. Oak Cliff is famous for its scenery and for its velvet-like greens.

"I'm going to play my best game this afternoon," announced Miss Harding when I had teed her ball.

"I always play my best game; don't you?" I asked.

"You shall judge of that when we finish this round," she declared.

It was my first game with her since the day she won the touring car from her father, on which occasion she made Woodvale in 116. This was so marked an improvement over her former exhibition that I was at a loss to account for it. Since then Miss

Harding had confined her golf to the practicing of approach shots and putting, following the instructions given by Wallace. I have been so busy with Wall Street and other affairs that I have paid little attention to golf, and smiled at her enthusiasm.

"How shall we play?" I asked. "You have improved so much and are so confident that I dare not offer you more than a stroke a hole."

"I shall beat you at those odds," she said. "This is a short course, you know."

"You will have to make it in a hundred to beat me," I replied.

"Fore!" she called, and drove a beautiful ball with a true swing which was the perfection of grace. I made one which did not beat it enough to give me any advantage, and we started down the field together.

"Mr. Wallace must be a wonderfully clever teacher," I said, "or else he has a most remarkably apt pupil. I wish I could improve that rapidly."

Miss Harding smiled but declined to commit herself. Her second shot was a three-quarter midiron to the green and she made it like a veteran. She played the stroke--and it is one of the most difficult--in perfect form, and I was so astounded that I cut under a short approach shot and had to play the odd. She came within inches of going down in three, and I then missed a long putt and lost the hole outright, she not needing the stroke handicap.

"One up, Jacques Henri!" she laughed.

She drove another perfect ball on the next hole, but the green was three hundred and fifty yards away and I reached it in two against her three. My work on the green was abominable and we both were down in fives.

"Two up, Jacques Henri!" she exclaimed, her eyes dancing with excitement. "Really, now, don't you think I've improved?"

"Improved!" I gasped. "That's not the word for it! You have been translated into a golf magician! I cannot understand it!"

I don't suppose I played my best game, but even if I had I could not have won at the odds stipulated. I never lose interest in a golf game, but I must confess that I paid far more attention to her play than to my own.

It was not the first time that I had witnessed a fine exhibition of golf by a woman, but it was the first time I had been privileged to see a strikingly pretty girl execute shots as they should be made. All former experiences had led me to the belief that feminine beauty and proficiency in golf run in adverse ratio. But here was a superb creature who combined beauty with a skill which was surpassing.

It was difficult to believe the testimony of my own eyes. Here was a girl who had taken fifteen to make the first hole of Woodvale only a few weeks preceding; who had driven eight of my new balls into a pond which demanded only an eighty-yard carry; who had told me that the one ambition of her golfing life was to drive a ball far enough so that she might have difficulty in finding it; who had repeatedly missed strokes entirely, had mutilated the turf, sliced, pulled and committed all the faults and crimes possible to a novice--here was this same young lady playing a game which was well-nigh perfect to the extent of her strength!

When a woman is beautiful and plays a beautiful game of golf, then physical grace reaches its highest exemplification. Even an ugly woman becomes attractive when she swings a driving club with an evenly sustained sweep, picking the ball clean from the turf or tee. But when a supremely charming girl acquires this skill it is impossible to express in mere language the exquisite grace of it--and I am not going to attempt it.

Miss Harding made that round in a flat ninety against my eighty-two, and with the odds I had given her defeated me by five up and four to play. She made the same score as Chilvers, and he is a good player when on his game.

The game ended, we rested in the shade of an arbour where we could watch the players on many greens.

"Come now; make your confession," I insisted, looking into her face through the blue haze of a cigar.

"Confess what?" she innocently asked.

"Confess why it is that you deliberately deceived me regarding your game," I demanded. "Don't you suppose I know that you were not trying to play that day when you first favoured me with a game at Woodvale?"

"You know nothing about it," she laughed. "I have been taking lessons since then."

"Tell that to someone who does not understand the difficulty of learning this game," I responded. "Your father for instance. Unless you confess the truth, I shall tell him that you deliberately lured him into a trap by which you won that touring car."

"Tell him; I dare you!" she challenged me. "If he believes it he will think it a huge joke."

"And you told me that you once made a nine-hole course in Paris in ninety-one," I accused her.

"I did," she laughed. "It was in a competition with one club--a putter."

"Was that when you won the gold cup?"

She shook her head.

"What score did you make when you won that gold cup in Paris?" I asked.

"The witness declines to answer," she defiantly replied.

"You are guilty of contempt of court. Tell me, Miss Harding, why you played so atrociously that day?"

"Atrociously?" she exclaimed with mock indignation. "You told me that I was doing splendidly, and you said that with a little practice I would make a fine player. And now that I have verified your predictions you seem vastly surprised."

"I was--I was trying to encourage you," I faltered.

"In other words you were deceiving me, Jacques Henri. Confess that you were!"

"I do confess," I laughed. "You were the worst player I ever saw. Now you confess why you did it."

"I shall confess nothing," she declared, her eyes dropping as I gazed into them. "I shall confess nothing, Jacques Henri! Since when has it been decreed that a lady must confess to her chauffeur? Do not forget your place, Jacques Henri. Let's start for the club house; I see papa and others on the lawn."

I have a theory of the truth, but it is too foolish to put in writing. We made a speedy run to Woodvale after a most delightful afternoon.

ENTRY NO. XVII

THE PASSING OF PERCY

During the forenoon of the day following our visit to Oak Cliff Mr. Harding, Carter and I were sitting under the big elm tree near the first tee. We had our clubs with us, but the railroad magnate wished to finish his cigar before starting to play.

A farm wagon drove up the circular roadway which surrounds the club house, and the owner after glancing doubtfully about approached us. He was tall, angular, and whiskered.

"Can any of you folks tell me if a man named Hardin' hangs out 'round this here place?" he said, squinting at a card which I instantly recognized.

"I'm Harding," said that gentleman, walking toward him. "I reckon you're the man who owns the late deceased bull?"

"I shurely am," said the farmer, stroking his whiskers nervously.

"How much do you want for him?" demanded Harding, with characteristic promptness.

"Stranger," began the man with the hoe, "if you'll tell me how in thunder you broke the neck of that critter with one of them there sticks," pointing to our golf clubs, "I won't charge you one doggoned cent for doin' it."

We all roared, and then Harding briefly explained what had happened.

"I reckon you couldn't do nothin' else under what the stump speakers call existin' sar-cumstances," slowly drawled the farmer, "but he was a mighty fine young bull, an' I hated like all sin tew lose him."

"How much was he worth to you?" asked Harding.

"He was a Holstein, Mister, and I wouldn't er sold him for two hundred and fifty the best day you ever saw. He took second prize as a yearlin' at our county fair, and I was plumb sure he'd have the blue ribbon hung on him this year, but instead of a ribbon I found this here on his horns," he concluded sorrowfully, looking at the card with its string still attached.

"I'll give you three hundred and fifty dollars and call it square," said Harding.

"Dew you mean it, Mister?" his watery blue eyes opening wide, his thin lips pursed and his leathery face curiously wrinkled. "Dew ye mean it?"

"Of course I mean it, but I want his head. I'm going to have it mounted."

Mr. Harding opened his wallet, stripped off the bills and handed them to the pleased farmer.

"Mister," the latter said, "that's more than he was worth, and I feel kinder ashamed ter take all of it. Tell you what I'll do! I've got an old bull that's no good, but ugly as all get out, and if you'd like ter tackle him with that ortermobill of yours I'll turn him loose in that same medder, an' you can have it out with him an' it won't cost you a cent."

"Much obliged," laughed Harding, "but nature evidently did not design me for a matador."

If Miss Lawrence does not develop into a great player it will not be because of a lack of assiduity in taking lessons. Since Wallace has become professional at Woodmere she has taken one and sometimes two each day. She was starting to take one of these "lessons" when Harding returned.

"See here, Wallace," he said with mock sternness, "I am becoming curious to know if you are professional to our charming young friend or to the club."

"Why, Mr. Harding!" exclaimed Miss Lawrence, blushing furiously. "I have taken only six lessons, and you have no idea how I have improved."

"Without doubt," observed the remorseless millionaire, "but when do I get a lesson? My game has steadily deteriorated since I hit my first ball. As Smith says, I am way off my game."

"I shall be glad to give you a lesson any time to-morrow afternoon, Mr. Harding," said Wallace.

"All right. You and I will play Smith and Carter, and you put me right as we go along."

That was satisfactory all around and Wallace turned his attention to his fair pupil. I wonder if he is as exacting and she as interested at all times as during the few moments they were under our observation?

"A little nearer the ball," he cautioned her. "Grip firmly but keep the wrists flexible. Let the club-head come back naturally. Be sure and keep the weight of your body on the heels and not on the toes. That's better. Try that back swing again. Do not go so far back. Be sure that at the top of the swing your entire weight is on the right leg, and that the knee is not bent. Do not pause at the top of the stroke. Keep the head perfectly still and your eyes on the ball; not on the top of it, but on the exact spot where you propose to hit it. Now make a practice swing."

Miss Lawrence did so, and it seemed almost perfect to me, but Wallace's keen eyes detected faults.

"That right shoulder dropped a little," he said. "That's a bad fault. Let the right shoulder go straight through. Ah, that was a decided improvement! Now swing and keep that right elbow at least four inches from the body. You let your wrists in too soon, Miss Lawrence. Do not start them to work until you are well down on your stroke. That shoulder dropped again! Don't look up as your club goes through; that is a fatal fault. Fall back on those heels! Keep the back straight, or curved back, if at all. Now we will try it with a ball."

Wallace teed a ball and Miss Lawrence drove a very good one for her. It was straight and a trifle high, but it had a carry of fully 120 yards.

"Didn't I tell you I was improving!" she exclaimed, smiling triumphantly at Mr. Harding. "Mr. Wallace is a splendid teacher."

"Yes, and you are a splendid pupil," returned Mr. Harding, with a knowing smile, "but you give me a chance, or I'll lodge a protest with the board of management."

She laughed, waved her hand mockingly at him, and away they went. I noticed that Wallace was not playing. He carried the clubs and they walked close to each other. He said something and she looked up to his face and smiled. It was evident they had much to talk of, and while I cannot prove it, I am inclined to doubt if their conversation was restricted to the details of the game.

Harding watched them, a quiet smile on his strong, kindly, and rugged face. He was humming the air of an old love song.

"Smith," he said after an interval of silence, "there are only two things in this life really worth having."

"What are they?"

"Youth and health."

"How about love?" I asked.

"Youth and health own love," he replied. "Love is their obedient servant. I thank God that I have not lost my youth or my health."

I was privileged to see this remarkable man for a moment in a new light, one which increased my respect and admiration for him.

When we returned to the club house the veranda was buzzing with gossip. Miss Dangerfield was delighted when she found that I was not acquainted with the cause of the excitement. It gave her a chance to impart the news to one ready to listen, and she was not slow in taking advantage of it.

"Miss Lawrence has refused Mr. LaHume!" she whispered, though she might as well have screamed it through a megaphone, since I was the only one on the veranda in ignorance of it.

"How do you know?" I asked.

"I dare not tell," she said, but I knew she would. "If you'll promise not to reveal it to a living soul I'll tell you."

I promised.

"Mr. LaHume told Mr. Chilvers, Mr. Chilvers told Mrs. Chilvers, Mrs. Chilvers told Miss Ross, and Miss Ross told me, so you see that I have it right from the original source."

"And you told me," I said. "Why should the chain stop in so obscure a link. I am dying to tell somebody."

"But you promised not to," Miss Dangerfield protested.

"So did you," I replied.

"It seems that Percy flatly asked her to marry him, and that she flatly refused him," she continued, ignoring my implied threat. "I understand that Mr. LaHume is going to resign from the club."

"Why?" I asked. "Does he not find it effective as a matrimonial agency?"

"I don't know," she said. "There he is now, and he's trying to catch your eye."

I turned and saw LaHume, who signalled that he wished to speak to me. I saw at a glance that he had been drinking. He shoved a piece of paper into my hands.

"There is my resignation from the Woodvale Club," he said, his voice husky, and sullen anger in his dark eyes. LaHume is a handsome fellow, but there is something amiss with him. Possibly his ego is over-developed.

"I will present it to the board," I said, preferring to avoid discussion with him while in his then condition.

"I don't care a blank whether they accept it or not," he declared with a rising voice. "From this day I shall never step foot in Woodvale."

"Better think it over later on," I said.

"If you think I care to have anything further to do with a club which shelters and encourages low adventurers like this fellow Wallace, you do not know Percy LaHume," he declared, working himself into a fury. "And you and Carter are to blame for it," he concluded.

"I shall refuse to discuss that with you at this time," I calmly replied and abruptly left him.

A few minutes later I saw him striding down the path on the way to the railway station. As luck would have it, Wallace and Miss Lawrence had just left the eighteenth green, and stood chatting near the path which leads to the station. If they saw the approaching LaHume they paid no attention to him. At this moment Carter and Miss Harding joined me and the latter asked what I found so diverting.

"I hope that LaHume will have the sense not to pick a quarrel with Wallace," I said, pointing in his direction. "He is excited and--and nervous."

"Why don't you say it--intoxicated," drawled Carter.

LaHume had reached the professional and his pupil. We saw Wallace lift his cap as LaHume came within a few yards of them. The latter stopped, and though the trio was quite a distance away, we could plainly hear LaHume's voice, but could not make out the words. Wallace made a deprecatory gesture and Miss Lawrence drew herself up and faced LaHume in an attitude of scorn.

I noted that LaHume was gesticulating with his left hand, and that his right arm was lowered and to his back. He kept edging closer to Wallace.

Of a sudden LaHume's right hand swung out and he made a vicious lunge at Wallace. I saw the latter throw up his guard, but it was too far away to tell if the blow had landed. There was a struggle for a second or two, then Wallace pushed him clear, and like lightning I saw his left hand swing across to LaHume's stomach. LaHume was shot back several yards and fell heavily, his feet in the path and his head and shoulders on the turf.

It all happened so quickly that we stood there, spellbound. We saw Miss Lawrence rush forward and half fall into Wallace's arms. We saw him stagger to a lawn settee, she still clinging to him and screaming. LaHume lay as if dead.

These latter details I noticed as Carter and I were running toward them.

Wallace was on his feet before we reached him. He was attempting to calm Miss Lawrence who was moaning, "He has killed him; he has killed him!" I knew she feared for Wallace, but I was much more apprehensive as to the fate of LaHume.

Blood was trickling down the face of the young Scotchman, and its red had stained a handkerchief which Miss Lawrence had pressed to his scalp above his left temple. It was the sight of this which frightened her, but she comported herself with as much bravery as would most women under similar circumstances.

"I'm not much hurt," declared Wallace with a reassuring smile. "It's only a scratch on the scalp. Miss Lawrence is more alarmed than I am injured. I assure you it is nothing."

"LaHume struck him with a knife!" exclaimed Miss Lawrence, recovering her nerve as a wave of anger came to her. "He called Mr. Wallace a coward and a cad, and when Mr. Wallace tried to calm him he struck at him with a knife. Oh, I hope you have killed him!"

"I'm afraid your hope is realised," said Carter, bending over the inert form of LaHume.

"Small fear of that," said Wallace, but I detected a note of apprehension in his voice. "I aimed to disable without seriously injuring him."

As he spoke LaHume moved, groaned and half raised himself. In the meantime a group had gathered, and in it was Doctor Barry, a member of the club. LaHume was conscious but completely dazed. We were much relieved when the doctor said that he was not permanently injured. Ordering two of the servants to take LaHume to the club house and put him to bed, Doctor Barry turned his attention to Wallace.

Despite the spilling of blood the cut was a trifling one, and after giving it simple treatment, the doctor assured Wallace that he could attend to his duties as usual. An hour later the nervy Scotchman was out on the links giving Lawson a lesson.

We picked the knife from the walk near the scene of the encounter. The blow had been aimed at the breast or neck, but Wallace parried it and received the scratch before he could grasp LaHume's wrist. The quick wrench which caused the knife to fly from LaHume's hand fractured one of the small bones in his forearm, as was

learned when that desperate young man had more fully recovered.

It was a disagreeable incident, and I take no pleasure in recording it. Wallace immediately tendered his resignation, but Carter and I told him it would not be considered, and I am sure the management will uphold us in that action.

The conduct of Miss Lawrence convinces me that she is much attached to Wallace. Of course, nothing else was talked of during the afternoon and evening.

In the cool of the day Miss Harding accepted my invitation to play "the brook holes," as we call them, and we climbed to the top of "The Eagle's Nest" to watch the sunset.

I helped her up the steep rocks and finally we stood breathless, gazing down on our little world.

"At last we are alone," I said.

It was one of my usual brilliant remarks. There must have been a ring of tragedy or melodrama in my voice, but really I said it only because I could think of nothing else to say at that moment.

Miss Harding looked up with a curious expression in her deep brown eyes and a rather timid smile on her lips. It was as if she were wondering if I meditated hurling myself to the depths below, or if I intended to take this opportunity to launch some tender declaration.

I wish I had the command of language of the garrulous and ever entertaining hero of the popular novel. If I ever propose it will be in writing.

I can see that look of startled curiosity on her pretty face as I write these lines, and the more I think of it, the more am I convinced that she expected something far different from what followed.

I wonder what she would have said or done if I had thrown myself at her feet and passionately declared the love I bear to her? I wonder if those tender lips would have

murmured the words which would have raised me to the seventh heaven of happiness, or if she would have firmly said--oh, what is the use of wondering?

"No danger of being hit with a golf ball up here," I said, when she remained silent.

And then she laughed. Since there was nothing witty in my remark she must have been laughing at something else. I have an idea what it was, but I had sense enough to laugh with her.

"Do you know," I said, determined to frame a rational statement, "I believe Miss Lawrence is in love with Mr. Wallace."

"Indeed?" she exclaimed. "And what of Mr. Wallace?"

"I believe Mr. Wallace is in love with Miss Lawrence."

"What a delightful state of affairs!" she laughed. "Nothing then remains but to set the date, celebrate the event and live happily ever afterward."

"I do not say she will marry him," I ventured to qualify. "It probably started as a harmless flirtation on her part, but I really think she cares more for him than she would be willing to admit."

"If she liked him well enough to encourage his attentions, which is a fairly good definition of a harmless flirtation," she said, quite seriously, "and later discovers that she loves him and that he loves her, why should they not marry?"

I think my tactics at this point were rather clever. I saw a chance to obtain her views on a question most vital to me, and I proceeded to do so, but I hope I did not lower myself in her estimation. As I have said before, I think Wallace is good enough for any woman.

"Consider the difference in their stations in life," I interposed. "She has wealth, family, and a high position in society. Of Wallace we know nothing except that he comports himself like a gentleman in reduced circumstances."

"I should imagine that would be the most difficult time to play such a role," Miss Harding said. "We know those who cannot be gentlemen even under the most encouraging circumstances. The greatest happiness which can come to a good woman is to marry the man she loves, and if she allows wealth, position or any other selfish consideration to stand in the way she does not deserve happiness."

"Right you are!" I declared with an enthusiasm which may have betrayed me. "I agree with every word you have said."

"See those perfect yellows against that bar of vivid red," she said, pointing to the west, where the sky quivered with a naming sunset. "See how the light flashes from the windows of the club house! One would think it filled with molten metal. How sharp the old church belfry shows against that mass of golden cloud to the northwest!"

We watched this glorious scene in silence until the upper rim of the sun sank beneath the rounded crest of "Old Baldy." Then I helped her down and we walked slowly back to the club house.

Have I not the right to assume that Miss Harding "likes me well enough to encourage my attentions," which is her definition of a flirtation? I believe I have. I know that other young gentlemen belonging to the club have attempted in vain to compete with me for the favour of her society. All have failed--Carter alone excepted. But recently I have been with her more than has Carter. In fact I fear him less at the present moment than I have at any time. I shall soon know my fate.

For the first time the strain of my stock operations is telling on me. I have now purchased 35,000 shares of N.O. & G., and the market for it closed to-night at 60. If I were forced to settle at this figure I would be about \$345,000 loser. If the stock is valueless, as some of the experts are now declaring, I am liable for nearly \$2,000,000 more.

I have converted everything except my equity in Woodvale into money, and counting the margins in the hands of my brokers I find that I have nearly \$3,000,000. I suppose I could get out with a loss of half a million, and there are moments when my cowardice struggles against me and when I am tempted to abandon this hazardous enterprise.

I shall stick it out, however. I know the conspiracy which has been hatched, and I do not believe they will dare force the price down much lower. I am going to buy another block of ten thousand shares if it continues to decline, and then await developments.

If it goes to zero I shall still have a little money left, and I shall have the income from the old farm—but I shall not have the hardihood to ask for the hand of Grace Harding.

You may talk as much as you please but money is a commanding factor in love and marriage. It is all very well for a wealthy man to fall in love and marry a poor girl, but it is an entirely different thing for a poor man to aspire to the hand and heart of a wealthy woman.

Honestly, I don't believe it right that women should be permitted under the law to inherit vast sums of money—at least marriageable women. **No man of ordinary means who possesses a proper self-respect will espouse a woman whose income overshadows his own.**

I would limit the inheritances of marriageable women to a maximum amount of \$100,000. I wish Miss Harding did not have a dollar.

The contest for the Harding Trophy—I mean the bronze, and not the real Harding Trophy—has narrowed down to four of us, Carter, Boyd, Marshall and myself. I have a sort of a premonition that as that 'bronze gent' goes, so will go everything which I hold dear. I am making the fight of my life for it. I play Marshall to-morrow morning.



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ENTRY NO. XVIII

MR. HARDING'S STRUGGLE

I won my match with Marshall after a contest which went to the twentieth hole. He had me dormie one coming to the eighteenth, but by perfect playing I won it in a five and halved the match. Nothing happened on the first extra hole, but on the following I held a fifteen putt for a three and won a beautifully contested match.

Miss Harding went around with us and was my Mascot. I broke my record for the course, making a medal score of seventy-eight. Miss Harding congratulated me and I was so happy I could have yelled. Dear old Marshall did not take his defeat the least to heart, but he is not playing for the stakes that I am.

I have dreamed twice that if I won the Harding Trophy I should win everything.

Carter beat Boyd handily, and the prize will go to one of us. I must beat him; I shall beat him!

After having declared innumerable times that he would master the secrets of golf without aid from anyone, Harding finally surrendered and took his first lesson this afternoon.

"I take back everything I ever said about this being an easy game to play," he said. "I'm a pretty good 'rule of thumb' civil and mechanical engineer, I know a few things about the laws of resistances and all that sort of thing, I have watched you fellows hit that ball and have tried to imitate you, but it's no use. Now I'm going to do just what Wallace tells me, and if he can teach me to drive I'll pay him more than any professional ever made in the history of the game."

Harding certainly has had a time of it. For weeks he has laboured with a patience worthy of better results, he has purchased every known variety and weight of club. He has a larger collection of drivers, brassies, cleeks, mashies, midirons, jiggers, niblicks, putters and other tools than Billy Moon, and Moon is a specialist in that direction.

The surrounding woods, the ponds, brooks and swamps contain unnumbered balls which Harding has misdriven. He will not waste one minute looking for a ball which gets into difficulty, and since his arrival our orders to the manufacturers have more than doubled.

One of his ambitions has been to drive a ball across the old mill pond. It is a long carry and beyond probability that he can accomplish it, but I have seen him drive box after box of balls and give them to the caddies who have recovered them.

Wallace was on hand at the appointed time to give Harding his first lesson, and we had quite a gallery for our foursome, including Miss Harding and Miss Lawrence. Wallace was to play with Harding against Carter and me, but the chief interest centred in whether Wallace could effect any improvement in the playing of his ponderous pupil.

He told Harding to make several practice swings Harding did so and Wallace studied them closely.

"A man of your build should play with the left foot advanced," he said. "Bend the left knee but keep the other one more nearly rigid. Keep the weight of your body on your heels or you will fall on your ball when you swing through. Do not curve your back like a letter C. Keep the backbone straight but not rigid. It is the pivot on which your body and shoulders must turn, and how can it turn true if your vertebræ is bent?"

"I had not thought of that," admitted Harding, making a much better stroke.

"Unless the back is straight the right shoulder will drop, and that is fatal," cautioned Wallace. "Grip firmly and evenly with the fingers--not the palms--of both hands, but let the wrists be flexible until the club-head comes to the ball."

Wallace corrected other errors, and after fifteen minutes of instruction Harding teed a ball and for the first time in his life cleared the lane. He was as delighted as a boy who unexpectedly comes into possession of his first gun.

"Wallace," he declared, "if you will stick to me until I get so I can do that well half of the time I'll give you a hundred shares of the L.M. & K. and a job which beats this one all hollow."

"I think you will be able to do even better than that," said Wallace confidently.

As the game progressed Harding's play steadily improved and his face took on an expression of supreme satisfaction delightful to contemplate.

His crowning triumph came on the thirteenth hole, in which he drove the green and found his ball laying within a foot of the cup, from which distance he easily negotiated a two which won the hole, and, as it subsequently developed, the match, Wallace holding the best ball of Carter and myself even.

Harding made the round in 106, which is ten strokes better than any of his previous records. He tried in vain to induce Wallace to take some large sum of money, but this strange young Scotchman positively refused to accept more than the regular rate for a lesson.

LaHume left, bag and baggage, early this morning, and I doubt if Woodvale will see him again. His membership is for sale, and at a special meeting of the board his resignation was accepted. He seems to have been the villain of this diary, but really he is not a bad sort of fellow, save for a strain of tactless selfishness. I presume that his good looks eventually will win for him some unfortunate heiress.

Had he remained here until this evening he would have been treated to another surprise. Wallace took Miss Lawrence's high-powered automobile from the garage, and, after a preliminary run of several miles in which to become familiar with certain new devices, swung it around the club house and up to the landing steps with the easy skill in which he handles a mashie.

As Bishop says, he certainly is "a most remarkable hired man."

Miss Lawrence, Miss Ross and Miss Dangerfield soon appeared and, with Wallace, started on a trip which was to include a call at Bishops, and later a spin down the old post road and back by some circuitous route.

It is only a week from to-day until the meeting of the directors of the N.O. & G. I shall then know whether I am to be comparatively a financial nonentity or a man of affairs. And then I shall know something of vastly more importance!



ENTRY NO. XIX

THE TORNADO

Early Monday morning Mr. Harding took a train for Oak Cliff, where he had an appointment with Mr. Wilson. He made a remark to the effect that his mission pertained more to business than golf. Mr. Wilson is president of the bank through which the "Harding System" transacts most of its financial operations.

"You can do me a favour, if you will, Smith," he said. "I shall stay over night in Oak Cliff. We have visitors coming to Woodvale to-morrow evening, and I should be back here to dine with them by six o'clock. There is no train from Oak Cliff within hours of that time, and it has occurred to me that the folks might come for me in the red machine. Of course the Kid thinks she can handle it, but I hate to trust her on so long and hilly a route. Could you come with them?"

An invitation was never accepted with more cheerful willingness. It was arranged that Mrs. Harding, Miss Harding and I should arrive at Oak Cliff with the auto at about four o'clock Tuesday afternoon.

We were to start from Woodvale at half after one o'clock, so as to have plenty of time. That Fate, which is always prying into and disarranging the plans of us poor mortals, interfered with our arrangements an hour before the time fixed for our departure. The visitors who were to arrive in the evening came shortly after noon. It was exasperating.

I pictured myself making that long trip alone, and cursed the chattering arrivals who had the bad form to anticipate the hour set for their welcome. There were three of them, and I noticed that they were of mature years.

I sat glumly watching them and heartily wishing that the train which brought them had been blocked for an hour or two, when Miss Harding came smilingly towards me.

"Mamma cannot go," she said.

"And you?" I asked, hardly daring to hope for the best.

"They seemed glad to excuse me, Jacques Henri," she laughed.

I have no doubt I grinned like a Cheshire cat. I refrained from telling the abominable falsehood that I was sorry Mrs. Harding could not go with us, and an hour later the huge touring car rolled smoothly away from the Woodvale club house, its front seat occupied by a supremely happy gentleman of the name of Smith, and by his side a supremely pretty young lady who waved her hand to the elderly group on the veranda.

I had been so absorbed in the unfolding of the incidents just narrated that I took no note of the weather or of anything else. For a month or more the weather has been so uniformly fine that we had come to accept the succession of warm but cloudless days as a matter of course.

When I was a boy my father drilled into me a knowledge of the visible signs of impending changes in meteorological conditions. As I became older the study of the warnings displayed in the sky and in the indescribable variations in the feel of the air possessed a fascination for me. During the early years after the formation of the club the members jested me on account of my predilection for weather forecasting, but the uniform accuracy of these guesses commanded their surprise and subsequently won their respect.

Chilvers and others sometimes call me "Old Prog. Smith," and I am more proud of that pleasantry than of some others.

There was not a breath of air stirring. The atmosphere seemed stagnant, like a pool on which the sun has beat during rainless weeks. The dried tops of the swamp grass and reeds pointed motionless to the heat-quivering sky. The dust cast up by our car hung over the road like a ribbon of fog.

The forest to our left shut off a view of the western sky, but I felt sure that the clouds of an approaching storm were already marshalled along its horizon. Then we shot out into a clearing and I took one swift look.

From north to south was spanned the sweeping curve of a gray cloud with just a tinge of yellow blended into it. The ordinary observer would have seen in it no premonition of a storm. It was smooth, light in tone and restful to the eye as compared with the angry blue from out of which the sun blazed.

The upper edges of this mass were unbroken save at one point near the zenith of its curve. From this there protruded the sharper edges of a "thunder-head," as if some titanic and unseen hand were lifting to the firmament a colossal head of cauliflower, its shaded portions beautifully toned with blue. This description may be homely, but it has the merit of accuracy.

I said no word of my certainty of the oncoming tempest, but threw on full speed and dashed ahead at a rate which startled my fair companion. From the turn in the road just beyond the clearing we headed directly into the line of march of the storm. If it were slow-moving I calculated we would reach Oak Cliff before it broke, but I realised it would be close work.

Miss Harding leaned over and said something to me. The whirr of the machinery and the swaying of the car made conversation difficult. I presume she thought I was determined to show my nerve and skill as a driver.

"Why this mad haste, Jacques Henri?" she again cried, her head so close to mine that her hair brushed my cheek.

I returned a non-committal smile and fixed my eyes on the road which slipped toward us like a huge belt propelled by invisible pulleys.

The miles kept pace with the minutes. Of a sudden the sun was blotted out. When I lifted my eyes from the road I saw birds circling high in the sky. The cattle in adjacent fields lifted their heads and moved uneasily as if some instinct sounded a warning in their dull brains. Above the trees I saw the skirmish line of the storm.

In after hours Miss Harding told me that she had quickly solved the secret of my wild dash. For a quarter of an hour she hung to the swaying seat and said no word. Once I looked into her eyes and read in them that she understood.

We dashed through a little village and paid no heed to the angry shouts and menacing gestures of a man who wore a huge star on his chest. Oak Cliff was only ten miles away. Could we make it?

The restful grays of the cloud had disappeared; and low down on the horizon I saw a belt of bluish black, and as I looked, a bolt of lightning jabbed through it. We were now running parallel to the storm, and I believed I could beat it to Oak Cliff. I felt certain I could reach the little hamlet of Pine Top, and from there on it would be easy to get to shelter. Between us and Pine Top was practically an unbroken wilderness, a part of the country reserved as a source of water supply for the great city far to the south of us.

Into that wilderness we dashed.

We were taking a hill with the second speed clutch on when a grating sound came to my alert ears, and with it an unnatural shudder of the machinery. I threw off power and applied the brakes. As the car stopped the deep rolling bass of the thunder rumbled over the hills.

"We are caught," declared Miss Harding, but there was no fear in her voice.



"Not yet!" I asserted, springing from the car and making a frenzied examination of the cause of our breakdown. I knew it was not serious, and when I located it I joyously proclaimed it a mere trifle. But automobile trifles demand minutes, and nature did not postpone the resistless march of its storm battalions. As I toiled with wrench and screw-driver I cursed the folly which induced me to plunge into that desolate stretch of forest and marsh.

The roar of the tempest's artillery became continuous. The low scud clouds travelling with incredible velocity blotted out the blue sky to the east and darkness fell like a black shroud. I could not see to work beneath the floor of the car, and lost another minute searching for and lighting a candle.

In the uncanny gloom I saw the fair face of the one whose safety now was menaced by my bold folly. I saw her form silhouetted against the black of a fir tree in the almost blinding glare of a flame of lightning.

"Just one minute and I will have it fixed!" I said, and she smiled bravely but said nothing.

Still not a breath of air! The spires of the pine trees stood rigid as if cast in bronze!

This is the time when a storm strikes terror to my soul. With the first patter of the rain and the onrushing of the wind I experience a sensation of relief, but it is nerve-

racking to stand in that frightful calm and await the mighty charge of unknown forces.

As I bolted the displaced part into its proper adjustment I reflected that had it not been for the ten minutes thus lost we would have been in Oak Cliff. My calculations had been accurate, but again Fate had introduced an unexpected factor. I started the engine and leaped into the car.

"Only a mile to shelter!" I exclaimed. "I think we can make it. Where are the storm aprons?"

"We forgot them," she said.

"I forgot them, you mean," I declared. "Hold fast! It is a rough road!"

The red car leaped forward. I remembered that there was a farmhouse a mile or so ahead.

Never have I witnessed anything like the vivid continuity of that lightning. With a crash which sounded as if the gods had shattered the vault of the heavens a bolt streamed into a tree not a hundred yards ahead, and one of its limbs fell to the roadway. It was impossible to stop. She saw it and crouched behind the shield. With a lurch and a leap we passed over it.

I felt a drop of rain on my face. The trees swayed with the first gust of the tempest. We were going down hill with full speed on. A few hundred yards ahead was a stone culvert spanning the bed of a creek whose waters years before had been diverted to a reservoir a mile or so to the east. Save at rare intervals, the bed of this creek was dry.

As the recollection of this old culvert came to me I raised my eyes and saw something which drove the blood from my heart! A quarter of a mile ahead was a gray wall of rain, and dim through it I saw huge trees mount into the air and twist and gyrate like leaves caught up in an air eddy.

Holding our speed for a few seconds, which seemed like minutes, we surged toward the old culvert. Jamming on the brakes, I swung to one side of the embankment and

stopped almost on the edge of the dry bed of the creek.

Miss Harding leaped to the ground and stood for an instant dazed. I stumbled as I jumped, but was on my feet like a flash. The arch of the culvert was not thirty feet away, but had we not been protected by the embankment we should have been beaten down and killed ere we reached its shelter.

The stones and gravel from the roadway above were dashed into our faces by the outer circle of the tornado. Grasping Miss Harding by the arm I dragged or carried her, I know not which, to the yawning but welcome opening of the old stone archway.

I cannot describe what followed. It was as if the earth were in its death throes. We were tossed back and forth in this tunnel, a resistless suction pulling us first toward one entrance and then to the other, only to be hurled back by buffeting blows.

There was a sense of suffocation as if the lightning had burned the air. Our nostrils were filled with the fumes of sulphur, and we looked into each other's frightened eyes only when some near flash penetrated the awful blackness of what seemed our living tomb.

A tree fell across the west opening, one twisted limb projecting well into the tunnel of the culvert. We could not distinguish the crashes of thunder from that of hurtling trees or the demoniac roar of the tornado. All of our senses were assailed by the unleashed furies of the tempest; crazed with rage that we were just beyond their reach.

I cannot say how long this lasted. Observers of the tornado in other places state that it was not more than three minutes in passing. Its path was less than half a mile in width, but I am convinced that its onward speed was comparatively slow else we would not have reached the culvert from the time I first saw it until its edge struck us.

Then came a moment of appalling silence. The tornado had passed. With this strange calm the darkness lifted and we knew that the crisis was over.

We were near the centre of the tunnel. I became aware that I was holding her hands and that her head was resting on my shoulder.

As the silence came like a shock, she raised her head and our eyes met.

"God has been very good to us," she said, gently releasing her hands. "Let us thank Him."

Standing there in the rising waters we silently offered up our thanks to the One who rides on the wings of the storm and Who had guided two of His children to a haven of refuge.

The rain was still falling in sheets and the water had risen to our shoe-tops. In the growing light I discovered a projecting ledge near the centre of our shelter and helped Miss Harding to obtain a footing.

"If the water keeps on rising," she said, "we must get out of here. I am sure the rain will not kill us."

"That's true," I admitted, "but I hope the rain will cease before the flood reaches your ledge. It's coming down good and hard now."

It was pouring torrents. Though the crippled stream drained only a small territory the current had already reached my knees. I waded to the east opening and took one glance at the sky. The outlook was not encouraging, but we could stand another eighteen-inch rise without serious discomfort or danger. I realised that it would not do to be swept against the tree which partially clogged the further opening.

Half an hour passed and the rain still fell and the water rose inch by inch. We laughed and joked and were not in the least alarmed. Then the water lapped over the ledge on which she stood. She declared that her feet were wet as they possibly could get.

"I can stand it a few more minutes if you can," she said. "The rain is ceasing. You poor Jacques Henri! It's all you can do to keep your feet!"

I stoutly denied it.

"I'm having a jolly time!" I declared. "I see a light in the west. The rain will cease in a few minutes."

Even as I spoke the water rose several inches in one wave. I surmised what had happened. A dam had formed below us and the water was backing up. In less than a minute it had risen six inches, and was at her shoe-tops.

"We are drowned out!" I said. "Let's get out before we have to swim for it. Now be steady and remember your training as an equestrienne. Grab me by the neck and hang on and we'll be out of here in a minute."

I lifted her to my left shoulder and with my free right hand steadied myself against the wall of the tunnel. The bed of the brook was of soft sand and formed a fairly good footing. Luckily the same cause which so suddenly flooded us out materially lessened the force of the current, but it still struggled fiercely against me, and a false movement on the part of my fair burden might have led to distressing and even serious circumstances.

The water was almost to my waist but her skirts were clear of it. I slipped once and thought we were in trouble, but we safely reached the opening and it was a happy moment when I placed her on solid ground. Not that I was tired of my burden--not at all. I cheerfully would have attempted the task of carrying her the three miles between us and Pine Top.

A light mist was falling, but we did not notice that. We stood spellbound, gazing on a scene of unspeakable devastation!



To the north, west and southeast the forest lay prone like a field of wind-swept corn. Huge oaks and pines were tossed in grotesque windrows. Here and there gnarled roots projected above the prostrate foliage. The once proud trees lay like brave soldiers; their limbs rigid in the contorted attitudes of death.

The line of wreck was clearly marked along its northern line but the hills shut off our view to the west. The road to Pine Top was one mass of trunks and twisted limbs. For some distance in the other direction there was no forest to the right, and so far as we could see the road was clear.

At first glance I thought the [touring car a total wreck](#). It had been lifted and hurled on its side against a partially dismantled stone wall. It was half hidden by a large branch of a tree, and its rear wheels were buried in mud and debris.

As we stood silent and awe-stricken amid this manifestation of the insignificance of man, the sun blazed forth from behind a laggard cloud. The effect was theatrical. It was like throwing the limelight on the scene which marks the climax of some tense situation. Instinctively we lifted our arms and cheered for sheer joy.

"What care we for wrecked automobiles and wet clothes?" I shouted. "We live, we live!"

"It is good to live," she cried; "it is splendid to live!"

We smilingly saluted His Majesty the sun once again, and then returned to earth.

"What shall we do?" Miss Harding asked.

My most vivid impression of this charming young woman at that instant was that her shoes gave forth a "chugging" sound as she walked, convincing aural evidence that their spare spaces were occupied with water. I also recall that her hat was a limp and bedraggled wreck from being jammed for an hour or more against the roof of the culvert.

"I don't know," I frankly admitted. "It is certain we cannot take this road to Pine Top. I have an idea that our back track is clear. I suggest that I proceed to ascertain if this

machine is dead beyond hope of resurrection. If it isn't we'll take it back to civilization. If it is we'll abandon it and walk."

"It is now half past three o'clock," she said, looking at her watch. "Even if we are late in getting to Oak Cliff we must go there if possible, for I know papa will wait for us and be worried if we do not come."

"I'll do the best I can," I said, hesitating a moment and vainly attempting to think of some discreet way in which to express what was on my mind.

"It will take some time," I finally said, "and in the meanwhile you had better--you had better--"

"Oh, I'm going to," she laughed, and before I could look up she was on her way to the sunny side of the embankment on the further approach of the culvert. Ten minutes later I turned and saw her a few paces away silently watching me, and the same glance revealed a pair of dainty shoes on the top rail of the old bridge, and I presume that in some place was a pair of stockings so disposed as to give Sol's rays a fair chance to do their most effective work.

"I think I can fix it inside of an hour," I said.

"That will be splendid!" she exclaimed.

The sun was blistering hot and I worked like a Trojan, but again was it my fate to disappoint her. The working parts were clogged with sand and mud, and I had underestimated the magnitude of my task. I know now that our best course would have been to abandon the machine and to walk to Pine Top, but perhaps what happened was just as well.

It was 5:45 before the machine gave its first sure signs of returning consciousness. Miss Harding gave a glad cry and a quarter of an hour later when the red monster stood coughing in the muddy roadway those dry shoes were where they belonged.

With light hearts we waved farewell to the kindly old culvert and set our pace toward Woodvale. It was our plan to take the first crossroad leading from the path of the

tornado, and if possible make our way to Oak Cliff. We passed a small hut which nestled in the shelter of the rocks. In our mad rush I had not noticed it, but it seemed vacant.

A little farther on the road turns sharply to the right and re-enters the forest. As we came to the top of a knoll I looked ahead and saw at a glance that we were again nearing the path of the tornado. But I went on until the trunks of the stricken trees brought us to a halt.

"We are trapped, Miss Harding," I said, after an examination which proved that even foot travel was well-nigh impossible. "We are in the segment of a circle closed at its ends by fallen trees, and the worst of it is this: there remains to us positively no outlet to the road."

It was an exasperating situation. We decided to return to the hut in the hope that its occupant--if it had one--might be able to show us a trail through the woods to the west. As we came near the hut we saw smoke coming from its stove-pipe chimney. It looked mighty cheerful.

I knocked on the door and a big, good-natured Norwegian opened it. He is one of the watchmen employed by the Water Commissioners to keep trespassers off the lands reserved for water supply.

I briefly explained our predicament. He informed me that there was no wagon road leading to the east or the west, and said, with a wide grin, that our auto could not possibly get out until the road was cleared. Miss Harding joined us and made a despairing gesture when told the situation.

This man Peterson said that the tornado had missed his hut by a few hundred yards. He was in Pine Top when it swept through the edge of that village, killing several persons.

"Where is the nearest railway station?" asked Miss Harding.

"Pine Top."

"How far is it?" I asked.

Peterson scratched his head and said that to go around the fallen timber meant a journey of fully five miles.

"Will you guide us?" I asked. "I will pay you," I added, naming a liberal sum.

Peterson said he would when he had cooked and eaten his supper. It was then after seven o'clock, and the thought occurred to us that we were hungry. Peterson agreed to do the best he could for us in the way of a meal, and he did very well.

We were lamentably shy on dishes and knives and forks. We had bacon and eggs, fried potatoes, bread and butter and some really excellent coffee. There was only a single room in the hut, but it was clean and fairly tidy. Peterson explained that he never had company, and apologised for his lack of tableware.

Miss Harding was given the only regulation knife and fork, and I had the pleasure of beholding her eating from my plate. There was only one plate, Peterson using the frying pan and a carving knife.

What fun we had over that humble but wholesome meal! Miss Harding praised our host's cooking, and his honest blue eyes glistened at the compliment. Miss Harding and I sat on a board which rested on two nail kegs, while Peterson, against his protest, had the one chair in the house.

It was growing dark ere the meal was ended. I ran the touring car into the little yard and sheltered it as best I could under the projecting ledge of a rock. Peterson produced a big strip of heavy canvas which I put to good service by protecting the vital parts of the mechanism. Peterson assured us that the car would be safe, and with a parting look at it we entered the forest.

It was a long, tortuous and in places dangerous journey. While we were not in the track of the tornado, the storm had been severe over a wide territory. Fallen trees lay across our rocky trail and at times we had to make wide detours, forcing our way through thick underbrush and scaling slippery rocks.

Miss Harding proved a good woodswoman.

"If I did not know that papa is worried I would enjoy every moment of this," she declared, as we paused to rest after a climb of fully five hundred feet out of the valley.

The lightning was again flickering in the west and we pressed on. There were intervals of cleared spaces now and then. We climbed fences, jumped ditches and seemingly walked scores of miles, but still the flickering yellow light of that lantern led us remorselessly on. At last when it appeared as if our quest were interminable we surmounted a rail fence and found ourselves in a road.

"Pine Top half a mile," was the cheering announcement made by Peterson as he held the lantern so that Miss Harding could examine the extent of a rent just made in her gown.

Ten minutes later we stood on the platform of the little red station in Pine Top, and the spasmodic clatter of a telegraph instrument was music in our ears.

Down came the rain, but what cared we! The steel rails which gleamed and glistened in the signal lights led to Woodvale. We entered the room and waited patiently until the operator looked up from the jabbering receiver.

"When is the next train to Woodvale?" was my ungrammatical query.

"I wish I could tell you," he answered, rather sullenly. He had been on duty hours over time. "They've nearly cleared the track between here and Woodvale, but the Lord only knows when a train can get through from Oak Cliff."

"No train from Oak Cliff since the storm?" I asked.

"Well, I should guess not!" he gruffly laughed. "Oak Cliff's wiped off the map."

Miss Harding clutched my arm. There was startled agony in her eyes, her lips trembled but she bore the shock bravely.

"Did you get a message to that effect?" I demanded in a voice which must have surprised him.

"No, the wires are down between here and Oak Cliff, but a man came by here an hour ago who said it went through the village."

"Did it strike the Oak Cliff club house?" I asked.

"He didn't say," replied the operator, and then the instrument demanded his attention.

"These reports are always exaggerated," I assured Miss Harding. "Besides the club house is of stone, and it is protected by a hill to the west. Do not be in the least alarmed."

"We can only hope and wait," she softly said.

We heartily thanked Peterson and watched him as he disappeared in the darkness, tramping stolidly in the face of a driving rain.

Despite the rain it was warm and we sat on a bench under the broad roof of the platform. I did my best to take her mind away from the dread which possessed her, but it was a wretched hour for both of us. Then we saw the flicker of lights down the track, and toward us came a small army of labourers who had been clearing the roadbed between us and Woodvale.

They stopped a minute in front of the station. These hardy Italians stood in the drenching rain, axes in their hands or over their shoulders, their clothes smeared with mud, water running in streams from the rims of their broad hats; there they stood and laughed, chattered, jested and indulged in rough play while their foreman received his instructions from the telegraph operator. And then with a cheer and a song they started on their way to Oak Cliff. Happiness and contentment are gifts; they cannot be purchased.

Something to the south burned a widening circle in the mist and rain, and from its centre we made out the headlight of a locomotive. It was a passenger train, and as it crawled cautiously to the platform two men leaped from it and came toward us.

I recognized Carter and Chilvers.

They had heard of the tornado and had constituted themselves a searching party.

"Naturally your mother is alarmed," said Carter "but I assured her that it was nothing more serious than delayed trains. She knows nothing of the tornado."

We were informed that the up train would be held on a sidetrack until the one from Oak Cliff got through. There was nothing to do but wait. It was past midnight when we heard the blast of a whistle to the north, and when the train from Oak Cliff pulled in Mr. Harding was the first one to swing to the station platform.

"Well, well, well!" he exclaimed, releasing his daughter's arms from his neck, holding her at arm's length and then kissing her again. "Is this the way you call for me at four o'clock? Where's Smith? Hello, Smith! Where's the red buzz wagon?"

"Over there," I said.

And then we all talked at once. Chilvers danced a clog-step to the delight of the grinning trainmen, Carter removed his monocle and polished it innumerable times, Miss Harding laughed and cried by turns, Mr. Harding dug cigars from pockets which seemed inexhaustible, and gave them to the railroad men, and I furiously smoked a pipe and put in a word whenever I had a chance. It was an informal and glorious reunion.

The wires were working to Woodvale, communication having been made while we stood there, and the conductor was honoured that he had the privilege to hold the train while the famous Robert L. Harding sent a reassuring telegram to his wife.

It was nearly two o'clock when we arrived in Woodvale. I asked Mr. Harding how near the tornado came to the Oak Cliff club house.

"Smith," he said, laying his hand on my arm, "it passed so close that I could have driven a golf ball into it, and I was tempted to try. That's the best chance I'll have to get a long carry."

ENTRY NO. XX

FAT EWES AND SHARP KNIVES

At last I have the spare time in which to bring this diary up to date, but where shall I begin?

One romance is ended. It was very pretty and interesting while it lasted, but all things must have an end, especially flirtations.

Miss Olive Lawrence has left Woodvale. The season has only started, but she confided to Miss Dangerfield that she was wearied with golf and Woodvale. So with a smile to all, and having settled in full with Wallace for a dozen or more lessons she left for the south with an assortment of trunks which tested the capacity of the baggage car.

I feel rather sorry for Wallace, though I give him credit for enough sense to have realised that her interest in him could amount to nothing more than a desire to amuse herself. It does not speak well for fascinating qualities for our Woodvale gallants that Miss Lawrence selected this unknown outsider even as a target on which to practice flirtation archery, but, in common with most men, it is beyond my ken to fathom the caprices of a pretty woman.

Wallace says nothing, but I can see that he takes it to heart. He spends most of his spare time at Bishop's, but attends strictly to his business. He is the best professional we have ever had, and it is fortunate for the club that he did not gain the fair prize which many of us thought was within his grasp.

I have won the "Harding Trophy!"

Carter and I played for it last Thursday. I had absolute confidence that I should win, and when Miss Harding smilingly told me that she was "pulling for me," I had no more doubt that I could win than I had that I was alive. We had the largest gallery that ever has followed a match in Woodvale. The betting was two to one against me.

I beat Carter four up and three to play, and made a medal score of seventy-six, breaking the amateur record for the course. That statement is quite sufficient to tell the story of the game.

I gave a dinner in honour of my victory, and at its conclusion Miss Harding presented the "Bronze Gent," as Chilvers calls this beautiful statuette. She made a graceful speech and we cheered her wildly. How charming she looked as she stood beside the huge bulk of her proud father! I tried to say something in reply, but the light in her eyes seemed to hypnotise me, and after a few incoherent sentences Chilvers came to my relief by striking up our club song, to the tune of a familiar hymn:

"Oh, why can't I drive like other men do? How on earth can you drive if you don't follow through?"

CHORUS

"Hallelulia; watch that shoulder Hallelulia, my men; Hallelulia; get your wrists in! Must I tell you again?"

"Everybody come in strong on the second verse," ordered Chilvers, and we obeyed as best we could, also on the third. They run like this:

"I can't understand; understand it at all, Why I can't keep my eye on that little white ball."

CHORUS

"Hallelulia; keep a-looking; Hallelulia, my men; Hallelulia; keep a-watching! Must I tell you again?"

"Oh, why can't I hole out on each green in two? Because we all find that a hard thing to do."

CHORUS

"Hallelulia; grasp your putter Hallelulia, again, Hallelulia; hit it harder! Never up, never in!"

It was a great occasion, but I have things to narrate which are of much more import. The board of directors of the N.O. & G. railroad met on Friday!

Mr. Harding and I went to the city together. He was very busy looking over papers, and noticing his preoccupation I did not attempt to engage in conversation with him.

I had plenty to think of. This was the day big with my future. This was the day when the conspirators proposed to pass the dividend on the stock of the N.O. & G. Would they dare to do it? What would result if they did?

Knowing as I did that the earnings of the property had increased and that its prospects never were more favourable, I could not believe it possible that responsible officials would dare take so unwarranted a step for the purpose of influencing stock quotations. But while I kept my head and appeared outwardly calm, I was nervous, and I frankly confess it.

I was weighing the situation in its various lights when Mr. Harding spoke to me.

"Are you good at figures, Smith?" he asked.

"I can add, subtract, multiply and divide," I said with some confidence.

"Good!" he growled. "You've got nothing else to do, so you may as well help me on multiplication and addition. Multiply these by those and add 'em up--right quick, won't you?"

He passed to me a piece of paper containing the following memorandum:

500.....68-1/2

1100.....67-3/4

4000.....67-1/2

300.....66-7/8

600.....66-1/2

1700.....65-1/2

200.....64

2300.....63-1/2

1000.....62-3/4

500.....61-1/4

3000.....60-1/2

1200.....59

300.....59-1/4

100.....58-7/8

400.....58-1/2

250.....59

1000.....58-3/8

There were dates opposite the larger numerals, but these, of course, did not enter into the computation.

Harding handed me a blank pad and resumed his study of other papers which from time to time he produced from a large black-covered folio. It took me some time to finish this calculation, but at last my task was ended and I gave the slip to him.

"Sure that's right, Smith?" he asked, looking at the footing.

"Your 18,450 shares of N.O. & G. stock cost you exactly \$1,174,815, Mr. Harding, not including the commissions to your brokers," I said, calmly as possible.

His big head swung quickly and he gazed at me with an expression of abject surprise.

"Well I'll be--well--say, Smith, how in thunder did you get the idea into your head that those figures stood for N.O. & G. stock?" he demanded, after glancing at the slip to make sure that it contained no tell-tale initials.

"Because the dates of purchase correspond with the quotations," I responded, enjoying his amazement and wondering to what it would lead. "I am only guessing that you bought, but of course it's possible you sold or went short. Please do not imagine I'm attempting to pry into your affairs, Mr. Harding," I added.

He sank back into his seat and for several seconds said nothing.

"Do you mind answering a few questions, Smith?" he said.

"That depends," I smiled. "Go ahead and ask them."

"Have you been dealing in N.O. & G.?"

"Yes."

"Buying or selling?"

"Buying."

"Outright or on margin?"

"On margin."

"How many shares have you an option on?"

I hesitated.

"Mr. Harding," I said, "in answering that question I assume that the information is confidential and that it will not be used to my disadvantage. Up to now it has been a secret known only to my brokers."

"You will lose nothing by telling me," Mr. Harding said, and I knew that promise was as good as his note at hand.

"My brokers have contracted for 45,000 shares of N.O. & G.," I said, handing him a list of my purchases with dates, amounts, and quotations.

He studied it for a while in silence.

"I thought you did nothing but play golf," he said. "Tell me; how did you happen to go into a deal of this magnitude?"

I gave him the details of the conspiracy as I had discovered them. It is not safe at this time to disclose them even in this diary. Mr. Harding listened with growing wonder on his face.

"My boy," he said, when I had ended, "if there is anyone in the country who should have discovered and taken advantage of the facts you have just told me, it is myself, but I never dreamed of them until you had purchased more than 30,000 shares of that stock. These dogs think I'm in Europe! They were told so. They think they have sold me out, and perhaps they have. I did not watch it as I should have done."

For a minute the train roared on past suburban stations, under viaducts, through echoing rows of freight cars, and over clattering switches. We were nearing the metropolis.

"Do you mind telling me if you are alone in this transaction?" he suddenly asked.

"I am."

"Do you wish to go in with me in this deal?"

"I do!" I replied without hesitation.

"Good!" he said, offering his hand. "We'll talk no more of this here. It's not safe. Come with me to my office."

We reached his private office half an hour before the opening of the Stock Exchange. In five minutes the machinery of his wonderful system was in operation. Notes were dictated, messengers hurried away with them, men called, who listened to curt orders and vanished.

An hour passed and he gave orders that no one should be admitted until further notice.

"N.O. & G. is stationary around 59," he said, offering a cigar. "The directors meet at noon. They will pass the dividend. They think to shake out your 45,000 shares and a lot more in small holdings. In all I own 35,000 shares, so that together we control 80,000 out of 200,000. I now propose to show these honourable gentlemen a trick which will give them something to think about for several weeks to come. I know a _ gentleman _ who owns outright 25,000 shares. He is one of the heads of which you term "the conspiracy".

“It is not a conspiracy, Smith; it is business. He tried to sell me out and has failed as he will learn in a few minutes. He will then sell out the men who implicitly trust him, as they would sell him out if they could see a chance to make money out of it. Do not talk of conspiracies, Smith! These honourable business _ gentlemen _ down here are extremely sensitive, and you should be careful not to hurt their feelings.”

We quickly came to an agreement by which our holdings were pooled. It was stipulated that he should have entire control of the operations from that time on, and after settling important details I suggested that I go to my broker's office and await developments.

"There's nothing you can do here," he said, as I arose. "Yes, there is, too," he added. "The folks are going to drop in here at about two o'clock. I'm going to be too busy to bother with them, and I foolishly promised to take them to the gallery of the Stock Exchange. You'll be worth more money than you are now," he said with a grim smile. "Take them over and show them how a real sheep-killing looks when the ewes are fat and the knives are sharp."

I promised to call for them at two o'clock, and then went to the office of my brokers.

Carelessly glancing at the quotation opposite the letters N.O. & G., I saw that it had dropped to 56. The head of the firm approached me and asked me to step into his private office.

"The rumour is strong that the dividend will be passed," he said.

"Which is preparatory to saying that you would like me to put up more margins, I presume?"

"Business is business, you know, Mr. Smith," he said, softly rubbing his hands.

"I have, anticipated your caution," I remarked. Mr. Harding had warned me that an unwarranted demand for margins would be made, but confident of the integrity of my brokers I had doubted it. "I presume an extra ten points will satisfy you?"

He seemed surprised but said it would. I gave him a certified check for \$450,000.

"Thank you, Mr. Smith. You will excuse me for requesting this, but business is business."

"So I am learning," I coldly observed, and this closed our interview. I was convinced that "the conspirators" had gotten into communication with my brokers, but of course I could not prove it.

As the noon hour approached, N.O. & G. sagged off to 53 on comparatively heavy transactions. It stuck there until over the various mechanisms for sending information came this simple announcement, "The directors of the N.O. & G. have passed the regular semi-annual dividend."

The card boy of the stock board became busy. N.O. & G. dropped a point or more between sales, until it struck 47. I had small doubt of the outcome, but it is not pleasant to sit and watch the figures go up which hint at a loss of \$45,000 every minute or so. I tried to look unconcerned, but doubt if I succeeded.

I knew that not far away a strong man was at the wheel, but the best of ships go down. What if his plans had miscarried? I dared not think of it!

"Two thousand N.O. & G. at 48," called the watcher at the ticker. "Five hundred at 47-1/2; 1,000 at 47; 2,000, 400, 1,500, 3,000, at 47. Looks as if someone has pegged it at 47!"

The entire market was declining in sympathy with the disturbing news concerning this standard property. "Twelve hundred N.O. & G. at 47-1/4," called the man at the ticker. "Three thousand at 48; 1,500 at 49; 5,000 at 50! Someone's after that non-dividend paying stock!"

Like a man in a dream I watched that stock start on its dizzy climb. In five minutes it had reached 55, and by leaps and bounds it soared to 70. My brokers rushed to me with their congratulations. Did I wish to place any orders? Some strong interest undoubtedly was back of the rise?

I informed them I had purchased all I desired. I am not indifferent in the matter of money. I am ambitious to possess it for the prestige it gives and the power it grants, but it is the simple truth to say that in those triumphant moments and in the subsequent hours the thought which held possession of me and which made me superlatively happy was the consciousness that so far as material assets were concerned I had a right to aspire to the hand of Grace Harding!

For some time the quotations vibrated nervously about the seventy mark. I was about to start for Mr. Harding's office when a man with a loud voice read a bulletin just received.

"_One forty-five p.m._," he began. "_Robert L. Harding authorises the announcement that in conjunction with John Henry Smith he has purchased a majority of the stock of the N.O. & G. railroad, and that it will be operated as a part of the system with which Mr. Harding is identified_."

"Who in thunder is John Henry Smith?" asked a veteran stock gambler.

I hurriedly left the room.

In the inner offices of Mr. Harding's headquarters I found Mrs. and Miss Harding.

"We have heard the news!" exclaimed Miss Harding. "Isn't it splendid? I congratulate you, Mr. Smith!"

Mr. Harding appeared at this moment, a broad smile on his face.

"Not so bad, eh Smith!" he said, shaking hands. The fierce light of battle was in his eyes. "They're headed for the tall timber, but we still have their range! Did you hear the last quotation?"

"The last figure I saw was seventy-three," I said.

"Seventy-three?" he laughed. "I just bought a thousand shares for ninety-one. Take the folks over to the visitor's gallery and let them watch the animals. I'm going to begin to feed them raw meat in about half an hour."

As we walked toward the Exchange, Mrs. Harding said to me: "I think it's perfectly wicked the way you men gamble!"

Bless her dear heart, so do I, but what could I say except to utter some commonplace?

The huge box of marble and gold where this gambling is done already was seething with maniacs who had reached a stage of delirium pitiful to those who witness such scenes for the first time. It was as if a thousand human rats had been hurled into a pit, with heaven and earth offered as prizes to those who survived.

The swaying forms, the tossing arms, the frantic uplifted faces of aged men, the football rush of impetuous youths, the shrieks, howlings and bellowings of the combatants, the tramp of feet on the paper-strewn floor, the clatter of innumerable instruments, the tinkle of myriads of bells; and through the opened windows God's pure sunlight illumining this hell on earth--such was the scene they looked down upon.

I knew the signs which told when Harding threw the first bits of "raw meat" into this gilded corral. I knew that he long since had cornered N.O. & G., and that he would whet the appetites of his victims as only he knew how, but I did not know that it was his day of reckoning for other "conspirators" equally as grasping as those with whom I had measured my puny sword.

As the hands of the clock slowly crawled to the hour of three the frenzy of the mob in the centre of the pit became maddening. I had no way of knowing from where we stood whether prices were moving up or down, but it was evident that Harding was "feeding the animals."

Then the gong boomed the signal that the session was ended. The tumult rose to one resounding crash, hesitated, subsided and died away. The struggling groups dissolved and partial sanity resumed its sway.

I was ushered into Mr. Harding's private office immediately on our return. The magnate was in his shirt sleeves. His mouth was set in stern lines and his dark hair tousled as if he had just emerged from deadly physical combat. As I entered the room his features relaxed and then he laughed. It was the roar of the lion who raises his head for a moment from his stricken quarry.

"We won this foursome, Smith, ten up and eight to play," he said. "Sit down and I'll tell you how we stand. I put the market up to 175. Could have put it to a thousand if it had been necessary, but what's the use? There is a short interest of 60,000 shares. Most

of them are in the outer offices waiting to come in and settle. I'm going to let 'em off easy, Smith. Those who were extra dirty will settle at 200, and I've made a sliding scale down to 150, which is about what N.O. & G. is actually worth as an investment. Outside of your original 45,000 shares you have profits coming to you on about 20,000 shares which I bought for you at various figures on the way up. Roughly speaking it will net you somewhere between a million and a half and two millions, depending on how merciful we are to your 'conspirators.' How much will it cost you to take up your 45,000 shares?"

I consulted the statement of my account with Morse & Davis, my brokers in these transactions.

"I have paid them \$1,525,000, which margined it down to 30," I said. "In order to take the stock up I must pay them about \$1,375,000 more, making my investment in N.O. & G. a total of \$2,900,000."

"Tell you what I'll do, Smith," said Mr. Harding. "If you care to get out of this deal I'll take that block of 45,000 shares off your hands at \$150 a share. That's \$6,750,000," he concluded after making a rapid calculation.

"Thank you," I said, "but I've decided to hold it as an investment and go into the railroad business."

"Good for you, Smith!" he heartily exclaimed. "Mark my prediction; N.O. & G. will go to 200 before the first of the year. You've done fairly well for a beginner, my boy. Your investment and the contributions of the wicked 'conspirators' net you between five and six millions. That's better than sweating over that 'Bronze Gent,' now isn't it?"

The magnitude of my winnings nearly took my breath, and I fear that my expression and words showed it.

"You'll have to get out of here now, Smith," said Mr. Harding, glancing at his watch. "Take the folks for a ride or something to entertain them, and come back here at 5:30. Then we'll all go to dinner somewhere and take the nine o'clock train for Woodvale."

ENTRY NO. XXI

I AM ENTIRELY SATISFIED

For an hour I have been seated at a table on the veranda of the Woodvale club house looking over the pages of this diary.

Certainly I am entitled to a new sobriquet. As a youngster I was called "Socks Smith." In more recent years I have been hailed as "Foxy Old Smith," and by a few friends as "Old Prog. Smith," but as I review my record for the past two months it seems to me that I am fairly entitled to be called "Lucky Smith."

Of least importance, but none the less satisfying has been the wonderful improvement in my golf game. I am driving as long a ball as any club member. I have won the club championship and the Harding Trophy. I hold the low amateur score for the course, and only yesterday came within a stroke of defeating Wallace. I must admit that the poor chap was off his game. He is still thinking of Miss Lawrence. It's a shame the way she led him on, but he is young and will get over it.

It was my privilege to be instrumental in saving Mr. Harding's life from the mad rush of that bull. I showed a little judgment and nerve, perhaps, but luck gave me the opportunity.

Every incident preceding, during and after that tornado was in my favour. Even my mistakes resulted to my advantage. Fate smiled on me through the awful fury of that tempest.

These fortuitous happenings and incidents are nothing compared with one consideration which makes me the happiest man in the world. It is not that I made a lucky venture in stocks and acquired more millions than all of my ancestors ever possessed. That is something, of course, but I had enough money for any rational human being before this flood of wealth poured into my lucky hands.

These are not the things which steep my soul in joy ineffable!

I know that I possess the love of Grace Harding!

She has not told me; it is not necessary that she shall say the words to confirm the truth which has come to me. I know that she loves me; is not that enough?

Chilvers passed while I was sitting here and caught me smiling. I was reading the sixteenth entry in this diary.

"What are you grinning at, Smith?" he demanded.

I did not tell him. I had been reading my soliloquy to the effect that the knowledge of love is conveyed without verbal expression between those who love. I had written: "The man who fails to avail himself of this silent but eloquent language, and who stupidly assaults a woman with an open avowal of an alleged love deserves to be coldly rejected."

Then I wrote that these voiceless messages to the one you love would be considered and finally answered, and that there might come a day "when over the throbbing unseen wire there comes a telepagram sounding the letters 'Y-E-S,' then proceed with the sweet formality of a verbal confession and avowal of your love, and you will not be disappointed."

I have received that glorious message! Grace Harding has told me that she loves me!

The message was transmitted from the depths of her beautiful eyes! It has been confirmed by the gentle pressure of her hand as it rested on my arm! It has been echoed in the accents of her sweet voice! I have read it in the blush which mantles her cheek as I draw near, and I know it from a thousand little tokens which my heart understands and which my feeble words cannot express.

I am

ENTRY NO. XXII

I AM UTTERLY MISERABLE

On Board "Oceanic," East-bound.

I may as well finish the sentence which ends brokenly in the preceding entry. "I am _an ass_."

Three weeks have passed since I finished that entry with the most appropriate words, "I am." They fittingly express the consummate egoism with which I was then afflicted. I have recovered--partially, at least.

I am--there goes that "I am" again--I am on the "Oceanic" pointed for London. Unless we sink--and I care little whether we do or not--I should be in that city inside of forty-eight hours.

In looking over my luggage I found this diary. I gave it to my room steward and told him to throw it overboard. Then it occurred to me that it would be my luck that it would be picked up and published as the mental meanderings of an idiot, so I called him back and took it away from him.

This steward of mine discovered my mental unbalance the first day out, but considers me harmless and treats me accordingly.

I have decided to bring this diary up to date, retain possession of it pending certain developments, and then incinerate it with appropriate ceremonies. So I will begin at the beginning, which is the ending of the last entry with its immortal declaration, "I am."

I have forgotten what I intended to write when I started that sentence, and what it was cuts no figure. I only know that just at that instant Chilvers, Marshall, and Carter appeared, dragged me from my chair and insisted that I join them in a foursome. There was no escape, so I got ready and in a few minutes was with them at the first tee.

On my way there I met Miss Harding, Miss Ross and Miss Dangerfield. I chatted with them for a moment and went on. I remember--oh, do I not remember!--that I called Miss Harding aside and reminded her that we were to take a moonlight spin in my new automobile. She smilingly replied that she had not forgotten it, and with a look into each other's eyes which thrilled my very being I turned to join those golfers.

How can I write this? It is like pouring a burning acid into a wound!

I have forgotten who won the game. I know I played vilely for I was not thinking of golf. I was counting the minutes which must elapse before I could be by her side and tell her that I loved her.

I was rehearsing the words I should whisper to her as we paused on the smooth crest of "Old Baldy." I was picturing the fairy landscape shimmering in the moonlight, its rays falling on her fair face as I took her hand in mine. I saw it all as plain as I see this page in front of me. I felt it vividly as I feel the heaving of this great ship and the vibrations of its engines.

How could I play a decent game of golf under such circumstances?

On returning to the club house one of the attendants handed me a telegram which had just been received. I opened it carelessly and read:

Albuquerque, New Mexico. To JOHN HENRY SMITH, Woodvale:

If you wish to see your Uncle Henry alive come at once.

DR. L.L. CLARK.

I had an hour in which to get ready to catch the last train to the city and make the proper connections. I called my man and gave him the necessary instructions.

Then I began a search for Miss Harding. I suddenly resolved to declare my love that day if the opportunity presented. I was delighted when I found her alone in the library.

She did not hear me as I softly entered the room. She was seated near a window, an opened book in her lap but her gaze was not on its print and it was evident her thoughts were far away.

I gently touched her shoulder, thinking to surprise her. I shall never forget the changing expressions in her eyes as they met mine.

"I beg pardon, Miss Harding," I began. "I am--"

She rose to her feet, the book falling to the floor. Her pretty head was erect, her shoulders thrown back, her eyes flashing and her face deadly pale.

"Do not address me, sir!" she exclaimed, drawing away from me as if I were some repulsive animal.

I stood transfixed! I knew she was not dissembling. I could not think; I could not speak! The floor seemed flying beneath my feet, and I must have reeled.

"Leave me, sir! Leave me, sir, and never speak to me again!"

My voice came back to me.

"But, Miss Harding, there must be some mistake!" I stammered. "I beg of you--"

"There is no mistake!" she cried with intense bitterness, pushing past me. "If you were a gentleman you would grant the last request I shall ever ask of you!"

I stood as in a trance and watched her sweep proudly from out the room. I fell back into the chair she had vacated. I do not know how long I remained there or what tumultuous thoughts crashed against me like breakers storm-lashed on a rock-girt shore; I only know that my man found me there and told me that my train was due in fifteen minutes.

I went to my room and changed my golf for a travelling suit. The next I remember is that I was on the train rushing toward the city.

No sleep came to my eyes that long and awful night as the miles spun out which separated me from the one I loved so madly. Yes, I loved her then, and I love her now!

Like a caged and wounded animal I paced the narrow confines of my stateroom. Ten thousand times I asked for the disclosing of this pitiful mystery, and ten thousand times a mocking laugh came back in the roar and shriekings of the train. The car wheels chuckled in rhythm, the airbrakes hissed in derision and the engine whistle hooted in scorn.

It was daybreak when I threw myself on the couch and closed my eyes. I think I slept for an hour or so. To my surprise and disgust I found when I awoke that I was hungry. I had thought I should never care to eat again.

It was necessary to wait several hours when a thousand miles of my journey had been made, and I employed them in writing a letter to her. It was a long letter, and I poured my heart into it. I told her I loved her, and that I was innocent of offense toward her by thought, word or deed.

I could think of only one thing over which she might have taken offense, and this was so absurd that I regretted later to have dignified it by mentioning and apologising for it.

I recalled that I had touched her on the shoulder--the left shoulder. It was an ill-bred and thoughtless act, but as I knew, when I had pondered the matter more calmly, Miss Harding has too much sense and poise to exhibit such anger at what at its worst was merely a boorish indiscretion. It was the only straw on which I could float an apology for a concrete act, but I thought later on I did not help my case by mentioning it.

Imploring her to enlighten me as to my offending, and assuring her of my undying love and abject misery I closed an appeal which exhausted the persuasion, eloquence and rhetoric at my command.

I may as well say now as at any other time that I received no answer to it.

Uncle Henry died on the fourth day after my arrival. Before he passed away he expressed a wish that he be buried in the little Eastern town where he was born. He had forgiven me for turning the old farm into golf links, and aside from a few small bequests, I was his heir. Thus by the death of this good man I come into possession of money, estates, stocks and other property for which I have no use.

Of what special use is property to me? It does not help secure the one thing on earth I desire. I would rather--oh, what's the use of writing that?

As soon as my uncle was put under ground, I hastened to Woodvale. I arrived there nineteen days after my hurried departure. It seemed years, and I was surprised when I searched in vain for gray hairs in my head.

I gazed anxiously out of the car window for a glimpse of the club house, and my heart gave a bound when its tower came in sight. She was there! Would not the knowledge of my bereavement soften her heart toward me? Surely she did not know all that I had suffered.

As the train crossed the road over which we had sped on our way to Oak Cliff, I recalled that it was at this exact spot where she first had called me "Jacques Henri." How happy I was that day! I thought of the terrors of the tornado and would have given all that I possessed to live through it again with her.

Handing my bags to the porter I hastened toward the club house. I was hurrying across the edge of the eighteenth green when someone shouted to me.

"Hello, Smith!"

I turned and saw Marshall and Chilvers. Marshall pitched his ball to the green with more than his usual deliberation, and then they came toward me and I advanced to meet them.

"Where in thunder have you been?" asked Chilvers, and it suddenly occurred to me that I had told no one of my mission, neither had I left my address. The next instant I realised that Miss Harding had not told of the receipt of my letter. This might mean much or little.

"My Uncle Henry died out in New Mexico," I said.

"Too bad," said the sympathetic Chilvers. "Unless one of my uncles dies pretty soon I'll have to go to work. But why didn't you let us know where you were."

"I had just time to catch a train," I said. "What's the news?"

"News? Let's see?" reflected Chilvers. "Grandma Marshall, here, won the July cup, and our team won the match with South Meadows by a score of twenty-three to five. Say, we didn't do a thing to those boys. Moon has bought two new clubs, Boyd made the sixth hole in two, Duff won four dozen balls from Monahan, Lawson has a new stance which he claims will lengthen out his drive twenty yards--and speaking about Lawson, he discovers something every week which lengthens his drive at least twenty yards. I've figured out that he should be driving at least five hundred yards from improvements alone. That's all the news I can think of; do you know any, Marshall?"

"They have moved the tee back on the seventh hole," volunteered Marshall, "and--oh, yes; Wallace has gone."

"Where's he gone?" I asked, exasperated at the character of their information.

"Someone died over in Scotland and left him money," said Chilvers. "Just as soon as we get a good professional, his rich relatives pass away and we lose him."

"How is Mr. Harding?" I asked.

I saw Chilvers wink at Marshall.

"Did you say Mr. Harding or Miss Harding?" asked Chilvers.

"I said Mr. Harding. What's the matter; are you deaf?"

"I'm a little hard of hearing at times," he grinned. "Let's see; when did Mr. Harding leave here, Marshall?"

"It was the day that you and I beat Boyd and Lawson," said Marshall, after a long pause. "That was a week ago."

"I presume he's in the city," I carelessly remarked.

"I presume he is not," laughed Chilvers. "He's probably rolling around in the English Channel right this minute."

"Gone abroad?"

"That's what."

"And Mrs. Harding?" I inquired.

"Gone with him, of course. Also Miss Harding."

"And Carter," added Marshall. "They all went on the same boat."

"At the same time," laughed Chilvers. "You see that lots of things have happened since you went away. What are you looking so white and glum about, Smith? Brace up, man; it may not be true. Come up to the club house. We've got a new brand of Scotch, and it's great."

I don't know whether my laugh sounded natural or not, but I cheerfully could have murdered both of them.

In those brief minutes I learned practically all I now know concerning the departure and the whereabouts of the Hardings and Carter. There was a lot of mail awaiting me, and I opened letter after letter hoping against hope that there might be one from Miss Harding. There was none.

I discreetly questioned Miss Ross, Miss Dangerfield and others whom I met, and all that I learned was this: A few days after my departure the Hardings suddenly decided to go to England, or France or Germany or somewhere.

Carter was with them much of the time, but none of them talked of their plans, and all the hints dropped to me by the married and unmarried ladies of Woodvale were unproductive of information. They had been here; they were abroad--and that was all there was to it.

It was yet early in the day and I took the first train for the city and went straight to Mr. Harding's office. I am known to his representatives there. They told me that all they knew was that Mr. Harding had gone abroad to remain for a time.

"I assure you, Mr. Smith," said his private secretary, "that I do not know where he is. He said that his family was going with him, and that nothing possibly could happen here which would warrant bothering him. I am sure he would be glad to see you, and I can only advise you to call on his London bankers, who may have his address."

"Do you think the family are in England?" I asked, willing to accept the faintest clue.

"I have no more idea than have you," he replied and I am convinced he was telling the truth.

The "Oceanic" was the first boat to sail, and here I am. I doubt if a sane man ever went on so absurd and hopeless a quest. I have had nothing to do for several days but think over this situation, and the mystery of the sudden departure resolves itself into these two possibilities; first, that they have gone abroad to keep away from me; and, second, that they have gone to England for the purpose of celebrating the marriage of Carter and Miss Harding.

I do not see how I shall be of much use in either event. But this good ship is cleaving the water toward England at the rate of twenty-five knots an hour and I cannot turn back if I would.

I do not see how I am to stop the wedding. I remember that Carter once told me that if he ever married it would be in London. I suppose they are married before this time. Perhaps they will assume that I came across on purpose to congratulate them.

I cannot understand why Mr. Harding did not leave some word for me. Surely I have not offended him?

I met and chatted with him a few minutes before Miss Harding said the words which have made me the most miserable of human beings.

This thing is past my solving. I only know that whatever she has done or whatever she may do I love her and ever shall love her.

ENTRY NO. XXIII

A FEW CLOSING CONFESSIONS

On my arrival in London I lost no time in presenting myself to Mr. Harding's bankers. I also presented a letter of introduction from that gentleman's private secretary, and I presume these London financiers called a meeting of the board of directors to consider this weighty matter. I waited for hours, and was finally ushered into a private office. It was as dingy and inadequate as are most London offices, and I was properly impressed with its age, traditions and smells.

An old gentleman looked at me for a minute or two, and then took my letter of introduction from his desk. He read it carefully again, wiped his glasses and asked me if I were John Henry Smith. I assured him that to the best of my knowledge and belief I was.

He looked doubtfully at me, hesitated as if determined to make no mistake, sighed and then informed me that Mr. Harding had not left his address in their care. I was tempted to express the opinion that Mr. Harding showed rare judgment in declining to leave it with them, since it doubtless would require an action at law to recover it in the event he should have use for it, but I thanked the aged man for all that they had done for me, and emerged from this gloomy den into the street.

This reed had broken. I never had much faith in it.

I had more confidence in a plan I then set in motion. I have a friend in London of the name of Flynn. He is an American newspaper man. Flynn says he would like to be a "journalist," but needs the money; therefore he continues to be a newspaper man, and he is a good one.

Flynn is connected with one of the big news associations and after drifting with the tide of cab and omnibus traffic which gorges on Fleet Street, I finally located him in an office in New Bridge Street. I had not seen him in five years.

"Hello, Smith!" he exclaimed, placidly as if we had spent the preceding evening together. "When did you strike town?"

"Last night," I said, heartily shaking hands.

"I see that you recently put a crimp in that Wall Street gang," he observed, lighting a cigarette and leaning back in his chair. "You were in with Harding on that deal, weren't you?"

"Yes," I said, "and I'm looking for him."

I briefly told him of the death of my uncle, and explained that Harding had left suddenly and that it was necessary I should locate him without delay.

"He was in London stopping at the Savoy a week ago," said Flynn, after consulting a record book. "I sent a man to see him and he wouldn't be seen. No use for you to go there; they won't tell you where he went."

"But can you help me locate him?" I eagerly asked.

"Certainly I can, provided you stand the tolls," he said. "Electricity is as rapid here as in the United States, and if this magnate is on one of these islands we can get his address in four or five hours, if we have any kind of luck. Suppose we wire the twenty larger cities and towns, about the same number of summer resorts, and the leading golf centres?"

"Great scheme, Flynn!" I declared, "you're a natural detective."

"Natural nothing," growled that clever individual, "it's a part of the regular grind. It should be no great trick to find a man worth thirty millions in an area not much bigger than Illinois."

He wrote a telegram, dictated the list of places to his stenographer and turned to me.

"Any engagement for dinner?" he asked, and when I said I had none he suggested we go to the Savage Club. We did so, and that dinner was the first enjoyable episode in many dismal weeks. The quiet charm of the old club, together with its famous ale, had a soothing effect on my nerves, and after several pleasant hours we took a cab back to his office.

Flynn disappeared for a minute and when he returned he handed me a stack of telegrams.

"There are some reports already in," he said. "Look them over while I attend to the work for which I'm supposed to draw salary."

I read them hurriedly. There was no news of the Hardings from Birmingham, Manchester, Nottingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Brighton, Blackpool, and a score of other places. Then I opened one from [Glasgow](#). They had been in Glasgow, but had left. I was on the trail, and announced the news to Flynn. He smiled and again bent over his work.

In a few minutes a boy came in with more telegrams. They had been in Edinburgh on the day following their visit to Glasgow, but were not there now.

"They were in Edinburgh four days ago," I declared.

"Probably headed for St. Andrews," said Flynn, stopping in the middle of a sentence he was dictating. "Don't bother me, Smith, I'm busy."

I spent the next half hour studying a map of Great Britain on which I mentally traced _Her_ course from London to Glasgow and from there to Edinburgh. Another batch of telegrams from Plymouth, Hull, Dublin, Southampton, Newcastle, York, Hastings, and lesser places was silent concerning the missing Hardings.

It was ten o'clock in the evening when the boy handed me three envelopes. I read the first two and threw them on the floor. Without glancing at the date line I read the third one. It ran:

"Robert L. Harding, wife and daughter at the Caledonia.--Jones."

It was dated St. Andrews.

"I've found them!" I declared. Flynn was just closing his desk. His day's work was ended and he was in better humour.

"Where are they?" he asked, throwing a mass of stuff into a waste basket.

"St. Andrews."

"Of course. Every American golf crank heads for St. Andrews from the same fanatical instinct which impels a Mohammedan to steer for Mecca."

A study of the time tables showed that I could take a late night train which would place me in Edinburgh early in the morning.

"I'm indebted to you for this more than you realise," I said to him.

"Don't mention it."

"How much do I owe your concern for this service?"

"Couldn't tell you," asserted Flynn. "Won't know until the bills come in, and that will take a month or more. I'll have them tabbed up and send you a statement, you send a cheque and that will end it."

"If there is anything I can do for you I--"

"Nothing," interrupted Flynn, "unless you should happen to run across the New York plutocrat who hires me. You might tell him that unless he tilts my salary he is likely to lose the most valuable man who ever produced dividends for him."

"I'll do that!" I declared, and I meant it.

Two hours later my train rumbled out of the station and headed for Scotland. I had been supremely satisfied with my progress during the day, but when I began to analyse the situation I was unable to discover any sound basis for self-congratulation.

I merely had ascertained her probable location. That did not improve my prospects. I had not the slightest reason to believe that she had changed her attitude toward me, and I had no right to assume that she would receive, much less listen to me. She might be married, and probably was. I thought of these things and fell from the fool's heaven to which I had climbed.

But on I went toward Scotland. I would drink the cup to its lees. I fell into a troubled sleep, and after a miserable night did not know whether to be pleased or scared that I had finished the longer stage of my journey.

The early morning train from out Edinburgh's dingy station carried one passenger who paid small attention to the scenery between the beautiful capital of Scotland and its famous university town. My one thought when we crossed over the great bridge which spans the Firth of Forth was that it was unconscionably long, and that the train slackened its speed in taking it.

Then we came to a junction within sight of St. Andrews, and when I was informed by the railway agent that I would have to wait half an hour for a connection I told him that I would walk down the track. He informed me that this was against the law. Having some familiarity with the monotony with which the laws are enforced in Scotland, I smoked and waited.

The railroad skirts the links of St. Andrews, and from its pictures I recognized the club house. Disdaining to ask questions or take a carriage, I ordered my luggage to a hotel and started on a brisk walk, hoping thus to brace myself for the ordeal ahead of me.

She was here. Somewhere in this picturesque old town _she_ was living and breathing that very moment. _She_ had passed through the street which then resounded with my brisk footsteps. Her name had been Grace Harding. Was it yet Grace Harding?

I ran square into Carter!

"Why, my dear Smith!" he exclaimed, clutching at his monocle which came as near falling as it well could and remain in place. "Why don't you call 'Fore!' when you drive ahead like this? You're in Scotland, my dear fellow!"

I begged his pardon, though of course it was not necessary. We heartily shook hands--at least he did.

We were on a corner of a crooked and cobblestoned street which twists around the side of a hill. There is a small store on this corner, and its neatly pointed red bricks and shining plate glass are sharp in contrast to the ancient and somewhat dilapidated structures which surround it. I recall these facts distinctly, and I can see even now every attitude and expression on the part of Carter.

During our brief interview his eyes frequently wandered from mine to those plate-glass windows, as if something within were of vast interest to him.

"You're looking fine, Carter," I said, and he was; "St. Andrews must agree with you."

He smiled placidly and his eye twinkled merrily through that monocle.

"I'm feeling fine! Congratulate me, old fellow!"

The blow had fallen--but I stood it better than I had dreamed would be possible!

A swarm of thoughts came to me in that instant, but I maintained my outward serenity. I knew that he was a clean, honourable man and worthy in every way of the hand and heart of Grace Harding. Possibly they had been long engaged. All of my alleged rights and wrongs faded into thin air. Besides, what was the use of whimpering? It was a stunning blow, but I would stand it like a man.

"I do congratulate you, Carter!" I exclaimed, clasping his hand and looking him frankly in the eyes. "You have won the most glorious woman on earth, and I esteem it an honour that I have had the privilege of meeting her and of enjoying her society! I am--"

"Confound it, man, you never met my wife!" said Carter. "What on earth are you talking of, my dear Smith? Ah, excuse me!"

He pushed past me to meet a radiant creature with laughing blue eyes who came from out that little store. He smiled and took a tiny parcel from her hands. Then he said something to her and they turned to me.

"Stella, my dear," he said, her hand in his as they confronted the most dazed human on the face of the earth, "you have heard me talk so much of my dear friend, 'Foxy Old Smith'; well, here he is! Permit me to present Mr. John Henry Smith, champion of Woodvale, winner of the Harding Trophy, also Wizard of Finance!"

I assured Mrs. Carter that I was delighted to meet her, and if ever a man told the truth I did at that moment. I said a lot of things, laughed so boisterously that Carter looked shocked; I told of the death of my uncle and grinned all the time. I certainly must have made an impression on that lovely bride.

They compelled me to listen while they told of their marriage in London, nearly a week before. She is an English girl, and Carter kept his word that he would be married in London. Since she has never been in America, and since this was my first visit to Great Britain, it was evident I had not met her.

I do not know what Carter thought of my wild outburst. He has not mentioned the subject, and I shall not bring it up.

"Where are the Hardings?" I asked, when I no longer could restrain my impatience.

"They are stopping at the Caledonia," said Carter. "You probably will find the Governor out on the links. He has struck up a great friendship with 'Old Tom' Morris, and doubtless is playing with him right now."

"I think I will go and look him up," I said, as we came to a cross street. "I have an important business matter in which he is interested. I'll see you at dinner."

"The club house is yonder," said Carter, pointing down the hill. With a bow and my uncontrollable grin, I parted from them and armed with a card which Carter had given me, hastened toward the headquarters of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews.

The sedate gentlemen who were lounging about, waiting for the prearranged times when they are privileged to drive from the first tee, must have identified me as the typical American from the manner in which I hastened from one room to another. I explored the locker rooms, the cafes, reception hall, library, billiard room, the verandas, and every nook and corner of the structure.

There is one sacred retreat called the "Room of Silence." Here are displayed the famous relics and historical curios of the game, including clubs used by King James, also strange irons once wielded by champions whose bones have been mouldering for generations. In this awesome place one must enter with sealed lips, and sit and silently ponder over his golf and other crimes. It is sacrilege to utter a word, and not in good form to breathe too rapidly.

An elderly gentleman who looked as if he might be a mine of information was seated in a comfortable chair. He was the sole occupant of the room. I had not asked a question since I had entered the building, and here was my chance.

"Do you happen to know an American gentleman named Harding--Robert L. Harding?" I asked, deferentially.

He did not move an eyelash. I pondered that it was just my luck that the first gentleman I had addressed was deaf and dumb. As I crossed the threshold, I caught an indignant mumble: "Talkative chap, that; he must be an American."

I fled the club house and started down the course. There are three links, but I was certain that Harding would be playing on the "regular" one, and since it is rather narrow I had no difficulty in following it. For the first time I was possessed of no ambition to play. Several indignant golfers shouted "Fore!" but I pursued my way, keeping a sharp lookout to right and left.

When about a mile from the first tee, I saw Harding. His head and shoulders showed above the dreaded trap of "Strath's Bunker," and not far from him was a white-bearded old gentleman with twinkling blue eyes who was smiling at Harding's desperate efforts to loft his ball out of the sand.

"Thot weel not do-o, mon!" I heard him say as I neared the scene of this tragedy. "Take yeer niblick, mon, an' coom richt doon on it!"

Out of a cascade of flying sand I saw his ball lob over the bunker, and with various comments Mr. Harding scrambled out of this pit, brushed the sand off his clothes, and then turned and saw me.

"Of all the damned places to get in trouble, Smith, this takes the cake!" he exclaimed, mopping the perspiration from his face. "Do you know," he added, looking about for his ball, "that it took me five strokes to get out of that cursed sand pit!"

He looked in his bag for another club, played his shot, and made a fairly good one, and then appeared to recall for the first time that he had not recently seen me.

"Hello, Smith; when did you strike town?" he said, a welcoming smile on his face as he offered his hand.

"About an hour ago," I said.

"Well, well! I'm glad to see you! Why didn't you wire you were coming? We'd have come for you in our new machine. Bought a new one since we came over here and have been travelling around in it. It's more comfortable than these confounded English trains. They're the limit, aren't they? Well, how are you? Seems to me you look a bit peaked?"

"I'm all right," I insisted. "How is--how is Mrs. Harding?"

"Never better in her life!"

"And how is--how is Miss Harding?"

We were on the edge of the green, and Harding had played his ball so that we passed near the old gentleman who was Harding's opponent.

"Smith," said that gentleman, "I want you to know Old Tom Morris! Of course, you have heard of him--every golfer has--and all that I ask is that I may be able to play as good a game and be as good a fellow when I am eighty-five years old. Mr. Morris, this is my young friend, John Henry Smith, of America."

I greeted this famous character with some commonplace remarks, and remained silent while they putted out. I made no further attempt in the conversational line until they had driven the next tee.

"How is your daughter, Mr. Harding?" I asked.

"Grace? The Kid?" he hesitated. "She's pretty well, but this climate don't seem exactly to agree with her. We must get her started on golf again. She hasn't played a game since she has been here."

My heart gave a bound when he said that little word "we." Surely he knew nothing of the trouble which had come between us. If she were married, he surely would have said something about it, and up to that minute I had a lingering fear that I might have lost her to some suitor other than Carter.

"And she has never played the course?" I asked, not knowing what else to say.

"Not once," he declared. "As a matter of fact, Smith, women are not very popular around here. They herd them off on a third course which is set aside for them. I looked it over, and it's a scrubby sort of a place."

"That's an outrage!" I declared.

"Oh, I don't know," he returned. "They can hack around over there and do no great damage. Between you and me, Smith, I think women are more or less of a nuisance on a course frequented by good players."

I recalled that I once held the same opinion, and in looking back to the opening pages of this diary I find that I expressed it even more brutally than did Mr. Harding. But I was in no mood to argue the matter with him.

"I presume Mrs. and Miss Harding are at the hotel?" I carelessly remarked. "I should like to pay my respects to them."

"They're about the hotel, I reckon," he said, taking his stance for a brassie shot. He made a very good one.

"How's that, Smith?" he exclaimed. "My boy, I'm getting this game down fine! Old Tom has put me onto some new wrinkles. See that old cock line out that ball! Isn't he a wonder?"

"I think I will go and call on them," I said.

"Call on who? Oh, yes!" he said, as I started away.

"By the way, you won't find Grace there, come to think of it. Let's see; where did she say she was going? She's painting the ruins, and has finished the old cathedral and the monastery. What's that other famous wreck around here? Oh, yes; the castle! I remember now that she said she was going to paint the castle to-day. Somebody ought to paint it. I understand it hasn't been painted for more than eight hundred years."

His roar of laughter sounded like old Woodvale days.

"What's your hurry?" he asked. "Tell you what let's do! I'll fit you out with a set of clubs and we'll play a few holes on the second course. Then we'll go to the hotel, talk over the news with the women folks, and this afternoon we'll drag Carter away from his bride, and you and he can play Tom Morris and me a foursome! How does that strike you?"

"I cannot play this forenoon," I promptly said. "I must attend to my luggage, shave, write some letters, send telegrams and--and do a lot of things."

"How about this afternoon?" he asked. "We start at three o'clock."

"I'll be on hand," I promised, desperately.

"All right, and don't fail," he cautioned me. "You would not believe it, Smith, but I have got so that I can line 'em out from one hundred and--"

I turned and left him with those unknown yards poised on his lips. When at a safe distance I looked back and saw him gazing at me with an attitude and expression of dumb wonder.

I retained the services of a red-headed and freckled-faced boy who was confident he could direct me to the ruins of the old castle. It was not a long walk, and when he pointed them out in the distance I gladdened his heart and brought a grin to his tanned face by giving him a half-crown as I dismissed him.

I was within sight of my fate! My steps faltered as I neared the grim arches, and once I stopped and tried to plan how I should act and what I should say. But I could think of nothing, and mustering all my courage and invoking the god of luck, I went on.



In a few minutes I stood within the shadow of the gray and crumbling walls, undecided which way to turn. Picking my way over fallen masonry, I turned the corner of a huge pile which seemed as if it might crash to earth at any moment.

And then I saw her!

She was seated at an easel, a small canvas in front of her. Her hat was lying on a rock near by, and the breeze had toyingly disarranged the dark tresses of her hair.

She was looking out over the ocean, a brush idly poised in her hand. I saw the profile of her sweet face as I stood motionless for an instant, not five yards away.

"Grace!" I softly said.

That easel with its unfinished canvas was tipped to the rocks as with a startled cry she sprang to her feet. For one agonising moment I gazed into her startled eyes and saw her quivering lips.

"Jack!" she cried, and we were in each other's arms.

I cannot write what we did or said during the first sweet minutes which followed, for I do not know. I only know that we told each other the most rapturous news which comes to mortal ears. Oh, the wonder of it!

We lived and we loved! This great earth with its blue-domed sky, its fields, its flowers and its heaving seas became ours to enjoy "till death us do part!"

There we sat amid the ruins where kings and queens had been born; where they had lived, loved and died centuries ago. Their ashes mingled with the dust from which they sprang; of their pomp and splendour naught remained save the walls which crumbled over our heads; since their time the world had been born anew, but the god of Love who came to them now smiled on us, his heart as youthful, his figure as beautiful and his ardour as strong as when he whispered sweet words into the ears of the lovers who dwelt in Eden.

I had forgotten that we ever had quarrelled. As we sat there looking out on the sea it seemed as if we had always known of each other's love.

"Sweetheart," I asked, "when did you first know that I loved you?"

"When I became angry at you," she replied.

"When you became angry at me?" I repeated, and then the thought of the anguish through which I had passed recalled itself.

"Darling!" I exclaimed, "why did you treat me so? What had I done? Sweetheart, you do not know how I have suffered!"

"But you must have known all the time that I loved you," she said, a strange smile on her lips.

"How could I know?" I faltered.

"Could you not tell?" she asked, lifting her dancing eyes to mine. "Who was the inspired author of lines which run like this: 'I have received that glorious message! Grace Harding loves me! The message was transmitted from the depths of her beautiful eyes! It has been confirmed by the gentle pressure of her hand as it rested on my arm! It has been echoed in the accents of her sweet voice! I have read it in the blush which mantles her cheek as I draw near, and I know it from a thousand little tokens which my heart understands and which my feeble words cannot express. I am--'"

"'I am an ass,' is the amended and proper ending of that sentence," I humbly said. "I beg of you, tell me how you ever came to see those words from my miserable diary!"

"It makes me mad even now when I think of it!" she declared, vainly attempting to release her hand. "You great big stupid; do you not know what you did?"

"I only know that I wrote those vain-glorious lines and that you must have read them," I said.

"I did not read them! Oh, I could box your ears! While you were composing that rhapsody Mr. Chilvers and others came along and asked you to play golf with them. Golf being more important than anything else on earth, you rushed up stairs for your clubs and left that diary on the table. Do you remember that on your way to the first-tee you met Miss Ross, Miss Dangerfield and me?"

I remember it.

"When we arrived on the veranda," she continued with rising indignation, "Miss Dangerfield picked up that literary treasure of yours and of course opened it to the page from which I have been quoting. And then she read it to us! I never was so mortified and angry in my life. I rushed away from them, and when you found me I was so angry that I could have killed you. It was not a declaration of your love for me; it was a declaration of my love for you!"

I could not help laughing, and then she did box my ears.

"That little minx of a Miss Dangerfield busied herself until your return from your golf game in copying from your diary its choicest extracts," continued Grace, after we had "made up," "but I managed to get them away from her, and I have them yet. Some of them were--well, they were nicer than the one Miss Dangerfield read."

"Which one, for instance?"

"I won't flatter your vanity by repeating them. But when I received your letter and had thought it over several days I decided to forgive you, Jack, and so I wrote you that letter."

"But I never received a letter from you!" I exclaimed.

On comparing dates we found that I had left Albuquerque before the letter could arrive there, and that it probably had not been forwarded to Woodvale in time so that I would get it prior to my sailing.

"It was a cold and formal letter," she said, trying to look severe.

"I don't care anything about the old letter, sweetheart," I declared, "now that I have found you."

And then we laughed and cried and were very happy. It seems that Miss Dangerfield gave the diary to the steward, who must have sent it to my rooms, for I have no recollection of missing it at any time.

We talked of many, many things as we sat there within the shadows of the old castle.

"Oh, Jack!" she suddenly exclaimed, "we must secure an invitation for you to the wedding."

"Ours, dearest?" I innocently asked. "Do I need an invitation?"

"You are so stupid I'm afraid you will--if it ever takes place," she added, looking down. "Be good, Jack, and don't tease me. I meant to Lord Marwick's wedding."

"Lord Marwick? Who is Lord Marwick?"

"Lord Wallace Marwick, of Perth!" she exclaimed, clapping her hands in delight at being the custodian of some great secret.

"My knowledge of the peerage is so slight, dearest, that I confess I have never heard of, much less met, Lord Wallace Marwick of Perth," I declared, smiling in sympathy with her enthusiasm.

"Oh, yes you have! You know him very well!"

"I?"

"Yes, you; you dear old stupid!"

"Who on earth is Lord Wallace Marwick, or whatever his name is?"

"Bishop's hired man!"

"Wallace?"

"Wallace, our club professional!"

"And his bride is--?"

"Can you not guess?" she exclaimed.

"Miss Olive Lawrence," I hazarded.

"Really, Jack, you are improving. Two weeks from this noon Bishop's hired man, Lord Wallace Marwick, will be united in marriage with Olive Lawrence!"

If she had told me that her father had bought the English throne and was about to be crowned I should not have been more surprised.

"What was he doing at Bishop's?" I gasped.

"He was studying farming," she explained. "It seems that his father invested heavily in farming lands in the abandoned districts of New England. Upon his death Wallace determined to acquire a practical knowledge of the methods of American farming, and this was the way in which he went about it. He had already worked on two farms before he applied to Mr. Bishop. He was about to return to Scotland when he met Miss Lawrence. The reasons for his subsequent course you certainly must understand."

"How soon did Miss Lawrence learn that he was--that he was what he is?"

"Shortly after he became our professional," she replied. "That disclosure, and certain other disclosures constituted one of her 'lessons.' Olive confided the secret to me, and this is the principal reason we are here."

"Sweetheart," I said, after an interval of silence, "would it not be splendid to have our wedding at the same time? I have always been--been partial to double weddings."

"I do not know," she whispered, looking intently at the tip of her dainty shoe. "Perhaps--perhaps--I don't know what papa and mamma would think about it."

I heard the crunching of gravel.

"Don't you folks ever eat?" demanded a familiar voice, and Mr. Harding bore down upon us. We said nothing.

"Do you know what time it is?" he added, with an impatience which puzzled me.

"I have not the slightest idea," I truthfully replied.

"Well, it's nearly two o'clock," he declared, looking at his watch. "I've been looking everywhere for you, Smith, and then I began to be worried about you," turning to his daughter. "Why, Kid, you've had time to paint this old stone shack two coats."

"I imagine I'm to blame," I interposed.

"Have you forgotten, Smith, that you have an engagement to play a foursome with old Tom Morris, Carter and myself this afternoon?" he said, looking at us rather suspiciously, I thought.

"I have another engagement," I returned, mustering all my courage.

"What's that?"

"I have an engagement with Grace for life, and we wish to know if you will give your consent to our marriage two weeks from to-day!"

He gazed at us for a moment, a grave look on his rugged and honest face. He dropped his cane, took our hands in his and said:

"Children, you didn't fool your old dad for one minute! Take her, my boy, and God bless both of you! Your mother knows it, Grace, and she sends her blessing."

We almost overcame him with our expressions of gratitude. As we started back to the hotel he glanced at us and chuckled.

"I suppose you two have not quit eating?" he suggested.

We promptly admitted we were hungry.

"And I presume you will play golf once in a while?"

We assured him that we certainly should.

"Well, suppose we go to the hotel, get a bite to eat and then go out and play that foursome with old Tom Morris and Carter," he pleaded. "There is one green out there which is called 'The Garden of Eden,' and I want to show it to you. You, Grace, and mother and Mrs. Carter can go along and be the gallery. I'll promise not to say a word or give a hint about what has happened."

Oh, that happy, happy afternoon on the turf, sand dunes, braes and greens of Old St. Andrews! The sea gulls circled over our heads, the foam-flecked surf crooned its song of love, the River Eden wound about our pathway, and the blue sky smiled down upon us.

"Sweetheart," I said, "there is one confession you have not made to me."

"What is it, Jack?"

"Why did you play so wretchedly that first game in Woodvale?"

Old Tom Morris looked back and smiled in sympathy with her joyous laugh.

"They told me that you were a confirmed woman hater, and that nothing so exasperated you as to be compelled to play with a girl who was a novice. I wished to see if it were true. You are not a woman hater; are you, Jacques Henri?"

"No longer!" I declared.

"And you take back all the mean things you wrote about us in your diary?"

"Every word of it, Sweetheart!"

"Oh, Jack; I thought I should die of laughter when I drove those eight new balls in the pond. And when you never said a cross word, and smiled and tried to encourage me, then I suspected that you loved me."

"I wouldn't have cared if you had driven me into the pond," I said, and then I missed my fourth brassie.

Two weeks from that day there was a double wedding in the fine old drawing room of Marwick Mansion. From the wedding feast which followed cablegrams went to our friends in Woodvale, also one to Mr. James Bishop, farmer near Woodvale, informing him that sometime next season all of us, including the "hired man," would be with him for dinner and another dance in the new red barn.

We have been cruising in the Mediterranean, and now are anchored in the beautiful Bay of Naples. Mr. Harding has been pacing the deck and gazing at the smoke-wreathed crest of Vesuvius.



"Jack," he has just remarked, "that is quite a bunker, but with a little more practice I believe I can carry it."

The End

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