

Business Baron Gives the "Close-up" on Greenkeeper

By B. R. LEACH

"All is not gold that glitters."—*Shakespeare*.

WHENEVER I want to know anything in particular there always seems to be someone around handy to tell me all about it. The other morning, for instance, I was wandering across a golf course with my left eye trained on the turf looking for "golf-course mushrooms." You can get as high as 40 cents apiece for them if they haven't been cut or nicked. When I neared one of the flat mounds from which the players swat the ball I observed the local coal and lumber baron in the act of making a few preliminary wiggles prior to hitting it on the nose. He didn't seem to be in a very good humor judging from the expression on his face. It seemed there were too many mosquitos in his bedroom the previous night.

"However," he remarked, "this course is enough to put anyone to sleep so no doubt I'll make up for last night before I finish the round. The new green-committee they elected last night will have plenty of opportunity to demonstrate their stuff. The course is rotten."

Murmuring a few polite words of sympathy for his low state of mind I made the casual remark that no doubt the newly-elected green-committee, in view of the honor attached to their election to office, would make every possible effort to remedy the existing deplorable conditions.

"Well, yeah, maybe so," he remarked, "and then again maybe not so. They can't be any worse than the last green-committee gang we had running this course. At any rate this new bunch have my sympathy. This green-committeeing business isn't any bed of roses. In fact it's getting to a point in most clubs where it's not the easiest thing in the world to get candidates for the green-committee. Nobody really wants the job. Of course now and then you can drag in a member who plays second fiddle in his own domestic orchestra. It gives him a chance to assert a little authority now and then, but with most of the members, nothing doing.

Green-committeeing interferes with business, and with one's game of golf. When a green-committeeman goes around the course he spends ten per cent of the time playing golf and the remaining ninety per cent checking up on the greenkeeper. It gets so no one wants to play with him. Besides which it gets at times to a point where every time he sticks his head in the locker-room a howling mob of plus-foured golfers proceed to give him hell about this, that or the other thing until he actually begins to get sorry for himself. No, sir! being on the green-committee is not so hot. There's a big turnover in that line of business."

Why Make Martyrs.

I made the remark that his presentation of the case for the green-committee was decidedly enlightening, and raised the query as to why, in view of these conditions, golf clubs kept right on electing green-committees who didn't particularly want to be elected and who quit as soon as they could do so gracefully.

"Wouldn't it," I remarked, "be a much better plan for the clubs to hire someone capable of growing the grass on the course in which event they wouldn't need a green-committee. Then all the members could spend all their time playing golf. However, I hastened to add, probably they couldn't hire anyone who knows as much about growing grass as the green-committee knows."

"You're all wet, old top, on that point," advised my friend, the coal and lumber baron. There isn't any group of citizens, as a general rule, who could possibly know less about growing grass on a golf course than the average run of green-committees. They're nearly all city men. What do they know about grass-growing? They don't teach the subject in college. Besides which you have it all wrong. You don't have to be a grass grower to belong to a green committee. You can be green as grass on the subject of growing grass and still be a member of the green-committee. In fact a green-committee is in many cases really

a *green* committee, sometimes they're as green as the grass that grows on Ireland's hills."

"Take for instance," he continued, "an average green-committee. There's almost always a dentist on every green-committee and you know it takes brains to be a dentist. Then there'll be an insurance agent in the bunch. It takes brains to make money in the insurance business. Maybe there'll be a business man or a lawyer in the gang. All brainy fellows, every one. What's a little thing like growing grass to those guys? All you need to grow grass on a golf course is a strong back and a weak mind. You're not supposed to know anything about growing grass when you're elected to the green-committee. Not at all. You just naturally learn all about it while you're green-committeeing."

This was all certainly very interesting to me. I never realized before how versatile the average city man really was. They seem to be veritable mental giants.

"Of course," I remarked to my friend the coal and lumber baron, "you won't think it absurd if I ask you whether they never make even one teeny, weeny mistake in grass growing? And of course, in view of their dental, legal, business or other training they are no doubt able to grow a high grade of grass very cheaply and thereby save the golf club a heap of money."

Promoting the Party

"My boy," moaned the dealer in black diamonds, "you are a prize specimen of what Barnum would have characterized as a 'sucker.' How could a green-committee possibly be guilty of mistakes? Whenever mistakes are made around a golf course it's the greenkeeper who makes them. The green-committee's activities are all entirely constructive. Besides which you don't understand how they run a golf club nowadays. Golf clubs have lots of money and when they want more they have an assessment party. It's the green-committee's job to furnish the program for these assessment shindigs. You don't know what I mean by assessment? Well, if you ever join a golf club, you'll know."

All this hot-from-the-griddle dope certainly intrigued me, but there we were one or two points not quite clear.

"You used the term—'greenkeeper,'" I timidly interjected, "what is a *greenkeeper*, if I may ask?"

"Well," advised my friend, the lumber purveyor, "a greenkeeper is a guy they

caught young before he had a chance to learn that he could make three times the money he makes greenkeeping by having a relatively soft snap in some other line of business. A greenkeeper is a professional grass grower. It's his business. You see he has spent all his life growing grass. He knows grass from the day it sprouts until its ears get nicked by a lawn mower. He grows the grass until the green-committee finds out a few things about the process and begins to butt in."

"But," I interrupted, "tell me something. If the greenkeeper is a professional grass grower and knows how to grow grass, why does the green-committee have to go to the trouble of learning to grow grass? Why doesn't the green-committee spend its time playing golf and let the greenkeeper grow the grass? Of course I know I'm not clever and I hope you don't mind explaining these little details."

Situation Explained

"Good night," exploded the expert in hard and soft coal, "You're dumber than I thought possible. Are all you scientific guys like that? Now listen and *don't interrupt*. The situation is briefly this: The greenkeeper knows how to grow grass all right. That's a fact. Every turf expert will tell you that greenkeepers know their stuff. But the trouble is the green-committee *doesn't think* he knows how to grow grass, in fact, they don't think he knows much of anything. How do they get that idea about greenkeepers? Well, that's a long story but I'll do the best I can to explain the matter so you can understand the general situation. In order to obtain an adequate conception of this highly complex problem it is entirely essential that you be familiar with the city man's psychology. What's that you say? I'm using too many big words? All right. What I mean to say is that you gotta have the low down on how a city man uses his bean. Get me? All right. Now here's the way it works out: When a city man meets another man in the city he sizes him up. If the guy has an \$80 suit draped artistically about his person with his pedal extremities (feet) encased in a pair of \$20 kicks, a Duke of Wellington collar covering his Adam's apple and a \$16 hat on top of his dome, then this walking clothes-horse is a smart guy beyond all shadow of a doubt. The city man *knows* this guy is a smart fellow because if this guy wasn't a smart fellow he wouldn't be able to take

enough jack away from another smart city fellow to buy all those up-and-coming glad rags with. Do you follow me? All right. Now here's where the rub comes. That sort of psychology is all right in the city, but it isn't worth a tinker's dam out in the country where the golf courses are located.

"Apply this city slicker type of psychology in the analysis of a greenkeeper, as you find him on his native heaths. On such a size-up the average greenkeeper doesn't stack up very high. In fact, he has all the outward appearance of a high-class truck-driver. Why? How in the hell are you going to look like anything else when you're the guardian of 18 greens, 100 acres of fairway, a barn full of dirty machinery and the whole damned business is climbing up round your neck 14 hours a day? The greenkeeper presents the greatest biological anomaly of the twentieth century extant. You might almost term him the great exception. Here's a lad who not only has to keep his brains in high gear all day long but in addition has to fight like the devil all day long to keep from being submerged in an onrushing sea of tractor grease, cow manure, loud-smelling fertilizer and what not. And what's the result? He looks like a laborer and these city-bred green-committee members think he's a laborer. They consider him a low common fellow. Why? Because they don't know any better and never will."

Greenkeepers' Uniform

"Well," continued my friend, the coal merchant, "what's the answer to a mess of this sort? The answer is so simple that no one has ever thought of it. Here it is: at the next meeting of the greenkeepers' association the following iron-clad resolution should be passed: 'Resolved, That from this date forward the members of the greenkeepers' association shall conduct themselves as per the following instructions: on arising in the morning the greenkeeper will indulge in a leisurely hot bath followed by a close shave, hair cut, shampoo, facial massage, and manicure. The greenkeeper will then give serious consideration to the question of proper and suitable raiment for the day's activities, his choice being, of course, governed by seasonal considerations. Each garment to be strictly in the mode but conservative in cut and texture. Flashy or ultra-modish garb is to be avoided at all costs. During the cooler fall months, for instance, a

proper costume for the well-dressed greenkeeper will consist of striped worsted trousers, a cutaway coat correctly piped with satin, a Duke of Wellington collar with blue polka dot tie, a silk hat (more commonly termed a 2 gallon hat in certain sections of this country) together with black shoes encased in white spats although those of a light, mauve coloring are permissible. Linen to be rich in texture and in accord with the general tone of the costume. Correctly attired as above and following a leisurely breakfast of kippered herring, honey-dew melon or other delicacies of the season, the greenkeeper will then be driven to the golf course in his official car by his chauffeur.

"From this date forward any greenkeeper discovered doing any actual work will be summarily fired from the greenkeepers' association. Let the laborer do the work. Greenkeepers are also advised that this association has made arrangement with the golf clubs of the country for the suspension for 30 days of any member who has the temerity to address a greenkeeper by his first name."

"There, my boy, is the answer to this mixup of greenkeepers and green-committees," said the coal baron. "There it is in a nutshell. If the greenkeepers' association passed and enforced that resolution, everybody would know that greenkeepers had brains and green-committees would go where the woodbine twineth and the wombat calls to his mate."

At last I realized to the full that I was talking to a genius, a captain of industry as it were. What a tremendous insight into the problem he possessed. I could not forbear one final question.

"Has any green-committee ever tried the experiment of confining their activities to the game of golf and allowing the greenkeeper to do his stuff? If so, how did it work out?"

"Oh, yeah, it's been tried," said my friend, "but it didn't work out so very well. In fact it was rather a tragic affair. I remember it well. It all happened over at the Ookematooc golf club, just west of here. A year or two ago old Bill Smith was elected green-committee chairman at Ookematooc. He tried to wriggle out of it but they nailed him to the mast. Well, the morning following his election to the chairmanship, old Bill sauntered down across the course until he met the greenkeeper down near the tool shed. He im-

(Continued on Page 42)



Will Not Fly Away

ANGLE-TEE

Advantages Worth Having
 Angle-Tee lessens topping by spotting eyes back of ball, aids direction, gives ball perfect getaway (ball absolutely free at time of impact) stays put. **FREE SAMPLE** to pros, and those identified with the trade. For immediate sales order sample display carton. The **ANGLE-TEE Company** 211 Meriam Bldg. Cleveland, O.

25¢ BOX

Your 1929 Budget Should Include the

MAC GREGOR COMPOST DISTRIBUTOR

The MacGregor Compost Brush properly, speedily and economically applies compost into the greens, keeping grass erect for cutting and insuring true greens.

It saves labor and material. Highly recommended by clubs of highest maintenance standards.

Order direct—No dealers!

MAC GREGOR COMPOST DISTRIBUTOR CO.
 Box 717 WHEATON, ILL.

TO YOUR OWN CLUB BE TRUE AND IT WILL FOLLOW—that before ordering Charge Checks, Score Cards, Guest Registers, Caddie Cards and other forms you will first see our line of standardized golf printed matter.

JOHN H. VESTAL COMPANY
 703 South La Salle Street - - Chicago

—COUPON SCORE CARDS—

MEDAL PLAY TOURNAMENT CARDS
 MATCH PLAY TOURNAMENT CARDS
 GRAPHIC HANDICAPPING CARDS
 TOURNAMENT RECORD BOOKS

Write for Descriptive Circulars.

THE GRAPHIC SCORE BOOK CO.
 100 Main St., Park Ridge, Ill.

HARRIS TWEED

The Aristocrat of tweed for Golf wear. Suit-lengths by mail. Samples free. **NEWALL, 404 Stornoway, Scotland.** AGENTS wanted.—Club Professionals preferred. Good remuneration.

Business Baron Gives Close-up on Greenkeepers

(Continued from page 18)

parted the sad news of his election to the guardian of the greens along with the following general statement of his policy and platform, to wit: 'Now, Jack, you know I made my money in the bootlegging business. I don't know a thing about grass and furthermore I don't want to know anything about the damned stuff. From now on you run this course the best you know how and if any of the cut-throats comprising the membership of this club give you any guff tell them to go to hell or refer them to me and I'll tell 'em. I guarantee they'll never give me a second opportunity. Furthermore as an indication of the fact that I'm not talking through my hat you'll find on Saturday night that your pay has been increased five bucks per week. Don't spend it all on riotous living.'

"Did you ask whether the greenkeeper was tickled to death at this glorious opportunity," remarked the coal baron. "Well, I'll tell you. It wasn't exactly a case of his being tickled to death, he just naturally dropped dead."

The Ladies

THE ladies! Here is a constantly widening field of prospects for good merchandise. More and more of them are playing. More and more of them are buying equipment. You may hate to give them lessons, yet that is the best way to break into the field.

Style plays an important part with women. When style is the predominating factor, models soon become obsolete and the desire to "keep up with the Joneses" makes new equipment necessary. It would be a good idea to send a letter to your members' wives calling attention to the display in your shop and enclose a manufacturers' leaflet.

Department stores know that less than 20 per cent of those women who take a clerk's time buy anything. But the professional, with his knowledge of his business, should be able to very much improve this figure. Anyhow, bring them into your shop. Give them a few hints on their game if you happen to have noticed them. Remember that a woman will spend a lot to get something for nothing.