

Tales of a Wayside Tee

By GRANTLAND RICE.

(NOTE—This series will take up the play of leading American amateur golfers. It will not be biographical or statistical, but rather in the nature of random observations on some of the ways and achievements of our leading golf stars.)

Arnold Bennett's book, "How to Live on Twenty-four Hours a Day," would be of only slight interest to Donald Ross, the golf course architect. What Donald would like to read would be a book entitled, "How to Get in Forty-eight Hours a Day."

For there isn't a man in the country-side in any profession whose services are in keener demand than this exceedingly popular Scot, who is booking engagements anywhere from six to eight months ahead.

The Record Course Builder.

A short while ago we had a long talk with Donald on the subject of golf course construction. He should know a trifle about this enterprise by now, as he has laid out over 200 courses and is undoubtedly responsible for more traps and bunkers than any four men in the world.

Along this line he tells a story of a certain experience. "I had just finished a hard day's work on a Chicago course," he said, "and had come to the station to check my baggage and buy my ticket. Just as I left the ticket window a man came by carrying a golf bag. He had a worn, worried look about him—about the way I felt. As he saw me he stopped. 'Isn't this Donald Ross?' he asked. I assured him that it was. 'Do you sleep well at night?' was his first question. I thought this a rather strange opening remark, but I told him that as a rule I slept very well after a day out in the open. 'Then you must have a cast iron conscience,' he said. 'Any man who has caused as much misery, suffering, heartache and trouble as you have should never be able to rest an hour.'

"I found out later that he had just come in from one of the Chicago courses that I had laid out, that he had been in about every bunker on the place and had finished with a 132. And he held me responsible for every bunker shot he played."

Good News for Duffers.

The eminent golf architect, however, has some good news for duffers. "I believe," he said, "that the development of bunkering and trapping a course has about been completed. Just now I can't see any further advances in sight beyond the best courses—those of the type of Brae Burn, the National Belleair and others. The main development from now on will be in the way of landscape effect, of building for beauty on a course as well as the right test for golf."

Ground Needed.

"To lay out the right sort of golf course," says Donald, "at least 120 acres are needed. There are 18-hole courses that have gotten by with 90 or even less, but this is crowding things entirely too far. It is far better to control enough soil to give plenty of room, and unless one can get something over 100 acres it is much better to lay out but nine holes and develop these in the proper way. Good golf holes are not matters of mathematics, as so many people think. Proper trapping requires the most careful sort of study and proper distances are not to be guessed at. Twenty yards may make the difference between a very fine hole and a very poor one. In laying out holes there are at least four important types: First, the short or one-shot holes; second, the drive and pitch; third, the drive and the full iron or brassie, and fourth, the three shotters of the drive, brassie and pitch variety. There is no way to lay down any set standard for any of these holes. But it is well enough to figure on the average that any short hole requiring only a mashie or an iron should have a small green and one thoroughly surrounded by traps or pits. The same should be true of the drive and pitch hole, of which there are vast numbers of poor ones and very few good ones. For this type of hole a big premium should be put upon a proper placing of the drive to open up a way to the green—and the green should be small and well guarded. One of the finest types in golf is the hole requiring a drive and a full iron or a wooden shot for the second—ranging in distance between 410 and 450 yards. The full iron shot to a well trapped green is the hardest test in the game, the one shot above all others where the professional excels the amateur. This type of hole should be so trapped that a well placed drive will give a much simpler and safer shot, where a tee shot off the proper line will call for an exceedingly difficult shot for the green."

"One of the most difficult types of holes is the three-shot affair. Holes of 500 yards and more must have a number of interesting features to prevent monotony. And one of the main points to consider here is to so arrange the trapping that a missed shot at any stage means four to reach the green. The golfer who misses his drive or his second shot should be unable to get home with his third, and the correct arrangement of these pits requires experience, judgment and the most careful study of conditions at hand. No one wants an easy course any longer. The call has now gone out for courses that require and develop skill. The old wide open affairs were very poor schools for golf. There was no training for control or for any variety of shots. Today, over the best courses, the golfer who hasn't good control over his wood and iron equipment isn't very likely to score through lucky breaks, or through topped shots that were once about as useful as the well hit ball."

"There is now," he continued, "a far greater pride even among the poorer players in getting a par in the right way. And those who have followed golf have begun to realize that a good golf game can only be developed on a good course."

So the call has come to golf architects from every section in the way of a growing demand as new courses pop up right and left. Those who have made a study of this art or science or industry are worked to the limit to fulfill engagements, where the best ones can get from \$100 to \$150 a day for their work. The smaller towns and cities have now begun to take up the game and the growth for the next five years is sure to be far beyond the average imagination.