

deadly sin is that of playing for the win of the present, instead of risking present defeat for the sake of a future gain. A player who plays only for the present, will retain his present form to the end, while he who is constantly trying to play a higher standard of game has the only chance of improvement.

Golf is very like its indoor brother, billiards, in that it is essentially a mechanical game, and because the mechanical part of it is so important, nothing can take the place of continual practice on right lines. I may here remark, that I consider the most valuable practice to be that of taking out say a dozen balls into a field, and learning to play them at varying distances. An hour spent thus will improve a beginner more than four or five hours spent in struggling round the links, yet how few men will go and do what is "the scales and exercises" of golf, when they can get any sort of a round?

A very fine golfer remarked to me that his game had recently improved very considerably, in that, though he could not play any particular stroke better, he felt his play, (to use his own expression) had become "machiney." He was quite right, he had dropped into the machine-like accuracy of the professional, and in consequence his game had become much more deadly. His constant striving after a better form had at last borne fruit in that, while still retaining his old brilliancy, he had acquired that accuracy of play which is the only mark of the line between first and second-rate players.

There are, I think, three elements which go to make up form in golf, execution, judgment, and temperament.

Golf from one point of view, that of *execution*, is an almost purely mechanical game. Accuracy of play is dependant on mechanical uniformity in carrying out the players mental grasp of the stroke before him. There is a correct stroke for each

distance, and the desired result is obtained, not by putting more or less of force into the stroke, but by playing the true mechanical stroke for that distance, and for this, great accuracy in striking is necessary.

Then comes the element of *judgment* in the calculation of distance, of the nature of the ground, and of the difficulties to be surmounted. Faulty judgment can never be atoned for by correctness of style. It is I believe the fineness of a player's judgment and his temperament that causes some professionals to stand ahead of others who perhaps play a more perfect mechanical game.

To judgment must be added *temperament*, a very great determining quality of a man's game. We find brilliant, mercurial players who play splendidly to-day and wretchedly to-morrow, easy-going players, over-anxious players, players who start beaten, players who continually blame their luck, and grizzle over every little annoyance, and many others. In fact, men's temperaments in golf are as various as the men themselves, but it is the *dour* determined golfer who is bound to come out on top of his brilliant light-hearted comrade. It is an extremely difficult matter to define what "form in golf" really is, though we are all conscious that it exists, and can instantly recognise it when we see it.

I have endeavoured to show its nature, and how to acquire it, but I should say to every golfer, play the game in the fine spirit in which it should be played, and whatever be your form, good, bad or indifferent, you will make an enjoyable companion in the brotherhood of golfers. The traditions of golf are, and ever have been, most honourable. The game itself is absolutely dependent on honour, and is one whose charm largely depends on its being played in that fine sportsmanlike spirit without which no game is worth anything.

