

older name for "lying as a fine art," but Maccchiavellem is not condemned by everybody. And Ethel produced a rather elaborate little fiction for the purpose of developing an enthusiasm in her husband which would relieve her from the reproach of neglecting him.

"Edward," she said, just before Whitsuntide, "I'm sick of London. We must get right away together alone into the country."

"Them's my sentiments exactly, my darling: where shall we go?" said Edward, delighted at the prospect.

"Oh, I've heard of a delightful place, right on the top of the Cotswolds. The Saundersons have taken a house on Minchinhampton Common, and they say there's a dear little place with a lovely little garden close by to let. What do you say, dear; shall we spend Whitsuntide there?"

The crafty little woman said nothing about the golf bacillus which is said to abound in those high latitudes, nor did she hint at the fact that the whole population of the neighbourhood surrounding

Mincing Hampton, Painswick Proud, Beggary Bisley, and Strutting Stroud, talks, dreams, thinks, and energizes about caddies, and bankers, and brassies, and fozzles, and putties, and gutties, and divots and stymies, to the exclusion of almost every other consideration in life.

"Once," Tom Saunderson, an enthusiastic golfer himself, had said to her, "Once, Mrs. Standard, you get your husband to address a golf-ball with the object of emulating the average drive of a golfing friend, once he finds that the club of enermises than meets that ball, and once you laugh at him for failing in his attempt from that moment, in the words of a classic, 'he is a golfer. Nothing can save him; his days will be occupied with topping balls along the ground, and his nights with dreaming of balls flying through the air.' No idle man who has once taken up the fascinating pursuit has ever been known to abandon it; and many a man has given up the prosecution of learning, the hope of distinction, the carrying on of business, for the sake of pursuing 'gutties' and 'putties' to their destined holes."

These words had sunk deep into Mrs. Standard's mind, and, with Tom Saunderson's co-operation, she looked forward to the enthralment of her husband; and certainly the results fully justified their anticipations.

The day after their arrival at Laburnum Lodge, Tom Saunderson called round. He carried in his hand a brassy.

"What's that thing?" said Edward.

"Oh, a golf club."

"What, do they play golf up here? I've never seen the game played."

"Never seen the game played, my dear fellow; why, no one does anything else here. What do you say to a walk round the links?"

"Oh, do let us," chimed in Ethel, running up at once to put on a hat.

"This is Pond Hole," said Tom Saunderson, after they had been walking a few minutes, and found themselves by the circular little piece of water which is paved, like another place, with good intentions—in the shape of golf-balls.

"You see that grassy corner there up among the trees, about a quarter of a mile away, that's Lancaster's Hole; you have to drive the ball from there, in as few strokes as you can, on to this green. Once on the green you try to put the ball into this little hole."

He took a "gutti" out of his pocket, and throw it on to the green about ten feet from the hole.

"That looks easy enough," said Edward.

"It's harder than it looks," retorted Tom. Then, turning to Ethel, he said.

"The next hole is up over yonder, this side of the distant wall. That's the Gate Quarry Hole."

Meanwhile Edward was surreptitiously trying, with but little success to put the ball into the hole with the handle of his walking-stick. It was harder than he had expected.

"Oh, I should so like to see a drive," suddenly exclaimed Ethel.

"That's easily done," said Tom; and, dropping a ball, with a beautiful clean sweep he sent it flying away over the pond a hundred and fifty yards towards the Gate Quarry.

"Oh that's lovely do let me have a try," cried Ethel.

Tom teed a ball nicely for her, and by good luck she sent it a few yards over the greedy pond in front. Then nothing would satisfy her but that Edward should try to emulate her success, and Tom, not without a sly smile, deposited another ball in position.

Their victim then grasped the "brassy" tight with both hands, brought it back quickly with both arms well bent, rose on his toes, hit wildly at, and—entirely missed, the ball.

Ethel laughed merrily, and Tom said, "Try again."

He did try again, and this time hit the earth so soundly with the heel of the club, some six inches off the ball, that he broke the head clean off the handle. Then there was an end to their performance that journey, but from that moment Edward Standard had an object in life. From that day he followed a jack-o'-lantern, a will-o'-the-wisp which landed him in rats, in quarries, in bushes, in ponds, and bunkers of all sorts. He invested in innumerable drivers, and brassies, and bulgers, and irons, and niblicks, and mashes, and cleeks, and spoons, and putters. In fine, before they left Laburnum Lodge he was a golf maniac of the most pronounced type.

When they returned to town, he cut a series of holes in the carpet of the billiard-

room, and practiced putting around the table. He became a member of every golf club that had a vacancy, and got put down for every one that was full. He spent at least four days a week, on the average, out of town, and was soon known on every green in the United Kingdom.

And Ethel Standard was abundantly satisfied. She could now enjoy herself with a clear conscience. She and her husband seemed to have reached a nice equilibrium in their lives. It was very satisfying to realise that now, for the first time since their marriage, her content was equalled by his.

"Toddy," she said to him one day at breakfast, "you remember it's Ascot next week?"

"Oh, is it?" he answered absently, turning over the leaves of the Field. "I hope it'll be decent weather. I shall be at St. Andrews."

"Indeed you won't my darling. You've got to take me to the races."

"My darling, I'm afraid that's quite out of the question. I've arranged with the two Fenwicks and Jack Loring to go up tomorrow (Sunday morning) by the Scotch express, and play a series of foursomes all through the week."

"Well, I do call that a shame. You knew I should want you for Ascot."

"My darling, I knew no such thing. Indeed, it's very difficult for me to know when you do want me. I'm sorry it should put you out; but really you have only yourself to blame."

"Oh, of course, you never do anything wrong. I wonder you like your wife to go to races under the escort of any other man. I should have thought, at least, my husband was the proper person to take me to such places."

"Now, Ethel, you know you are talking nonsense. However, it's no use discussing the matter further. I cannot go with you, and there's an end of it."

Yes, and that was not only the end of their first battle on equal terms, but it was also the beginning of the complete emancipation of Edward Standard from the government of his wife.

But it is not our object to follow out the process by which the equipoise of life was soon a thing of the past. It is sufficient to say that, whereas in the first year Ethel had ignored her husband's happiness, and neglected her domestic duties for the sake of routs, dinner-parties, flirtations, and balls, now, in the second year of their married life, Edward evinced a devotion to putting-greens, hazards, and golf-balls, which deprived Ethel almost completely of his society.

And then, of course, like every other human being, directly she had, by every means in her power, brought about a ridance nothing would satisfy her but that she must have her plaything back again. In her heart of hearts she had always