

Playing the Preacher

By Edgar A. Guest

"You must," the good wife said to me,
"devote one pleasant day.
Unto our new-come minister. At golf
he likes to play!
And so, obedient to her wish, I sought
the goodly man
And asked him would he like to shoot
the ball into the can.
"Aye, that I would," he, smiling, said.
"I think the game sublime."
So I prepared that afternoon to have a
rotten time.

I'd never played with ministers; it did
not seem to me
That one could preach the Word of God
and still a golfer be.
Yet when he changed his clericals for
garments less refined,
No golfer on the course would know he
hooked his vest behind.
"What odds shall I bestow?" I asked.
He answered, "None at all.
I'll play you level around the course. A
ball, a ball, a ball!"

Now that is true-born golfers' speech
It startled me a bit.
Thought I, "The parson knows the game
Perhaps the Church can hit!"
And when I saw him make a swing and
then observed his smile,
I whispered low to Alex Ross: "The
dominie has style!"
Then as his first drive left the tee I
further said it looked
As tho for three good dollar balls the
clergy had me hooked.

He hit 'em far and straight and true,
he putted like a fiend,
He smote the pill with all his might,
and into it he leaned;
He kept the honor all the way; and at
the final cup,
I paid him three good dollar balls, for
he was seven up.
"My friend," said I, "you have a style
for which all golfers search.
If I thought I could play like you, I'd
gladly go to Church."

FAMINE-SWEPT STEPPES OF RUSSIA

(United Press Staff Correspondent)

BULGARI VILLAGE, East Russia.—American food given through the A. R. A., is helping to preserve life in this, one of the most ancient spots in Russia.

Thirteen hundred years ago one of the three "Bulgarian" princes of the old Slav dynasty settled here with his retinue and followers. There were three brothers. The other two established themselves in Vienna and Sophia, respectively.

On the heights commanding the Volga grew a city of 30,000 inhabitants, which controlled the country for miles around. Remains of the old city wall are still standing and the American Relief Administration's children's kitchen, in the little schoolhouse, is only a few yards from the site of one of the palaces. For hundreds of years, however, Bulgaria has been a village, with about 1,500 inhabitants.

Of these 1,500 half have disappeared since summer, and unless help comes from outside, most of the others will be missing by next summer. Then the cycle of fate will be completed and in the space of six months, history will have sprung back fourteen hundred years, restoring Bulgaria as it was when the Black Prince encamped upon the promontory.

For miles in every direction stretch the level, treeless steppes, infinite in loneliness, extent and cruel beauty. Not a fence nor hedge or house breaks the skyline. In fact, there hardly seems to be any skyline at all, as I write this, so perfectly does the white of the snowfields blend into the light gray of the sky, overhung with snowclouds. A "Dutch" windmill, its four arms motionless, nearby, stands in opaque relief, like a cross against the background of snow and sky. A few stunted trees on both sides of the road climb the little incline from the plains to the top of the mole.

Across the frozen Volga, a mile wide, our caravan of four Russian sleighs drove this afternoon into Bulgaria. The snow stopped falling as we turned into a front yard of the log cabin schoolhouse where the A. R. A. gives ninety children one "supplementary" meal a day. This "supplementary" meal, however, is supplementary only in the technical sense of A. R. A. phraseology. Actually, it is all the children get to eat. And actually, also, it is enough to keep them alive.

We rolled out of our sleighs like huge balls of snow. The village lay around us in stillness and snow, each hut seemingly snowbound for years. Near the schoolhouse were the ruins of three old buildings, dating from the fifteenth century.

Inside, the schoolmaster and his wife greeted us with far western cordiality.

There was still fuel, so the school had not suffered the fate of so many in the famine region for the schools are closing rapidly now, as the woodpiles in the backyards disappear.

"We have very few books," the schoolmaster explained. "But we do the best we can. We have almost no paper and pencils."

Then he told how all activity—economic and social — had ceased during the last several months. How the simple peasants who were left after the cold weather checked the migration quietly withdrew themselves into their logcabins to await death in stoic silence.

I visited scores of these homes during the tour through the Tartar Republic. They were nearly all the same. Entire families, in varying degrees of suffering, huddled around the stove—where there was fuel or more commonly, lying on the bare floor with a guernseysack as a cover.

Often three generations, grandfather, son and grandchild, were together in various stages of the slow lingering death which the villagers of the Tartar Republic are dying. Meanwhile, the ceiling creaked rhythmically with the undulations of the cradle, under the hand of the grandmother. A Russian cradle is suspended on an elastic cord from the ceiling, and rocks up and down.

All three generations and both sexes live together in the common room, distributing themselves around over the stove and floor at night. I never saw more than one bed in a peasant's house. It was generally occupied by the son and his wife. The grandfather and grandmother slept on top of the brick stove, and the children, either on the hard floor or on the "children's shelf," a quaint feature of every peasant's house, a few feet from the ceiling. Here the children can be chucked out of the way at any time of the day or night.

We put up in many of these peasant houses during our trip, invariably meeting with touching hospitality, the hosts apologizing for not offering us food (even though they were themselves starving) and invariably hustling out the samovar in a jiffy.

A single table, two or three chairs, the huge brick oven, the cradle, suspended from the ceiling, one bed, and the icons in the corner, were the total wealth in furniture.

Very, very few have even steel knives and forks. The peasants eat their entire meal with big wooden spoons, or with their fingers. Cooking utensils are equally lacking. One or two pots, a big frying pan, a few crockery plates, a few cups and saucers or glasses for tea represented the sum-total of the housewife's equipment in most of the homes where we overnighted.

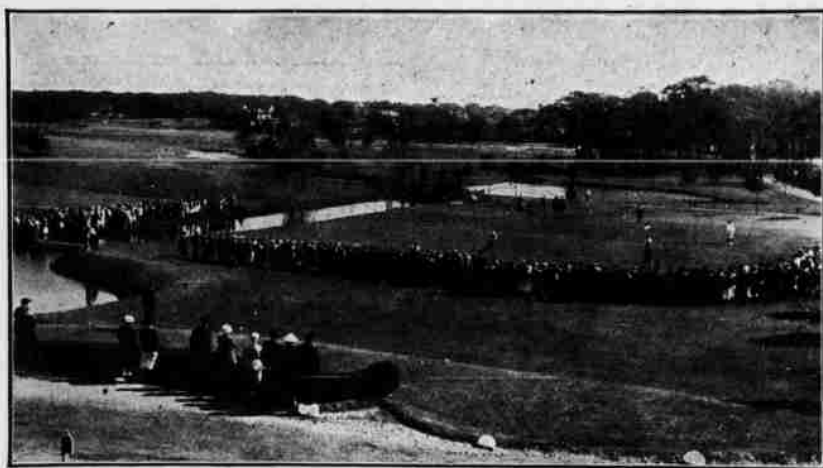
WILLIE WILSON HOLES A MASHIE SHOT

In the course of a round with Donald Ross on Saturday last, Willie Wilson holed a mashie shot for the seventh green on Number 3 course, scoring a two for that hole.

THREE-BALL MATCH

(Continued from Page 9)

A. B. Alley	109-21—88
F. T. Keating	89- 1—88
x-J. T. Newton	118-22—93
A. D. Fisher	118-22—96
Herman Ellis	111-15—96
x-H. W. Ormsbee	125-26—96
x-Credit of 3 strokes if played on No. 3 course.	



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