

Dear Bill Letter IV

Richland Center, N. Y., Aug. 14, 1921.

DEAR BILL:

A dog chasing his tail is making real progress compared with you. There's no sense in getting all "het up" just because your greenkeeper does not recognize you as the fountain-head of all knowledge. You must remember that you are about twenty-fifth in the line of chairmen that he has had to do with. He has seen them come and go like other animal pests, and without doubt he looks upon you as something to be endured with the best grace possible. You'll have to serve two or three years at least before you amount to anything; and he knows it. So don't get yourself all covered with lather because things don't go to suit you right off the bat.

After you've lived with your greenkeeper a year or so you will have a better notion of what he is up against and how he is trying to solve his problems; and on the other hand if you show that you really have the goods and know a little of what you are talking about he will commence to get your viewpoint and you two will get along fine.

When the chronic kicker on your board lets out his regular howl that expenses must be cut and it is all nonsense to spend so much money on the course, you'll feel there is no one on earth who has any sympathetic interest in you and your work except your greenkeeper, and you'll talk things over with him and get loaded up with facts and be prepared to floor your kicker friend at the first opportunity. They're all more or less alike, Bill, and you must get to understand them and think the way they think before you'll accomplish much. Don't forget your greenkeeper has probably forgotten more than you'll ever know; and when it comes to the practical end of the work, such as employing and handling men, laying out and completing work, getting the work done some how or other in spite of weather and what not, you will always be more or less useless. There's lots you can do to make yourself useful if you'll only set about it. It's a ten-to-one shot your greenkeeper is chock full of prejudices, whims, and fancies, and it's more than likely he would refuse to recognize a scientifically proven fact if he met it with a cow bell on it. While you are learning the game, see that he comes along with you; and when you think you have discovered something entitling you to a niche in the hall of fame, talk it over with him and find out how many holes he can blow through it. I'd be suspicious if he agreed with you about anything. If he does, you can make up your mind it's some fool thing that will not cost much and do little harm. After awhile you'll get on a working basis with your man so he'll really discuss the problems with you and try out his views on you. When you each begin to recognize that the other knows something and when you can scrap out your questions and troubles in a friendly way, then you'll be on a sound basis and you'll both be rendering real service to your club. Instead of going blindly along in the old-fashioned way, according to the old prejudices and fancies, you will be at least trying to reason things out, and you may find that two heads are better than one.

Another thing, Bill. Don't insist on carrying the flag over the ramparts. Don't try to get out in the spotlight. You may have helped create some praiseworthy result or condition, but the real work was done by the practical man. And see that he gets the credit that is due him.

You must remember also that your man has been tied down to his job for year after year and he has had no chance to get about and find out what others are doing. You get a line every day on your competitors; and it keeps you up-to-date and keen. There's every reason in the world why your man should get in a rut; but it's up to you to get him out and to keep out yourself. There's more to learn about this business than either of you realize; and if you'll both wake up to that fact and go at it together you'll make a great team and you'll both enjoy it. Take him with you to Washington some time and show him the grass plats at Arlington, and you'll both see more different kinds of grass and strains of grass than you supposed were in existence. Go together to some nearby city and spend a couple of days looking over the other fellow's course, and you'll both learn something. Try to understand that science has long ago demonstrated many facts, and that if you can learn the truth and apply it in a practical way you'll get results and save money. If some slick talker comes along and wants to spray your turf with an assortment of bacteria, you'll show him the gate instead of falling as a victim of conversation you don't understand.

I never met a greenkeeper yet who didn't know something worth learning, though some of them seem to think their secrets should be zealously guarded and be handed down to their sons. You'll enjoy listening to the "bunk" and stuff you'll get in response to your questions, and you two will enjoy many a laugh when you compare notes. Why, I had one top-notch greenkeeper solemnly tell me that a certain weed was grass turned foul from over-watering—and the melancholy part was that he believed it.

Bill, I'm getting awfully sick of wasting good advice on you. The soil is too barren to respond to the topdressing of the wisdom you ought to find in these letters. Hereafter instead of belly-aching to me about your troubles, go out to the barn and sit down on a box and figure them out with your partner.

If you two are going to spend from \$15,000 to \$25,000 a year of your club's money, it's up to you both to work together and hold directors' meetings—just the two of you—back of the barn or out around the course, so you can both understand and thrash out your problems; and if you can't agree, for the love of Mike don't call in an "expert." The expert will solve your problems without the aid of spectacles or a crutch; but if you set on his eggs your expected chickens will be ducks; or more likely the eggs will turn out to be China doorknobs.

Bill, don't bother me any more. I have trouble enough making my wife believe I know something without taking you on too. When you have served your novitiate and can think like a real greenkeeper we'll consider you as an applicant for the first degree; but you've got to choose your course, Bill, and do it quickly. You can either be an ornamental chairman and content yourself with pretty raiment, or you can learn the work and amount to something. I hope these few words will find you well.

Yours,

CHAUNCEY.

P. S.—Do all the clubs in your town belong to the Green Section of the U. S. G. A.? You ought to take it upon yourself to see that they do. Do it now!