HERE seems to be the answer to the puzzling question. Why do good players and duffers alike miss so many short putts? It is the discovery of a golf player who is an oculist by profession. He avers that everyone has a Master eye and a Subordinate eye, and that short putts are missed because of the unconscious transference of control from the Master to the Subordinate eye some time during the stroke. And he further asserts that the right eye is generally, though not invariably, the Master eye.

It is doubtful if one player in ten thousand is aware of the fact that he possesses a Master eye. Certainly until recently the writer has not been one of the knowing ones. But it can be proved conclusively.

Just point your finger at a spot on the wall and look along your finger at the spot. Continue to look at the spot and close your left eye. Now continue looking, but open your left eye and close the right eye. After this simple test no one will be inclined to dispute the entity of the Master eye.

Some Observations

HERE it seems appropriate to state that the writer has been watching short putts at every opportunity with close attention for a long time, and has two observations to submit:

1—That short putts are not missed nearly so frequently with the Schenectady as with other putters.
2—That the generally accepted explanation for missing short putts—looking up or lifting the head—would seem to be inadequate. By careful watching it has been determined that usually the player missing a short putt does not move the head nor look up till after the stroke has been completed, or just at the moment of impact of club-head and ball.

It is axiomatic that every cause is prior to the effect, and every result subsequent to the cause, therefore, if the head and eye have not moved till the completion of the stroke, how in the world could their movement have adversely affected the stroke?

Now with respect to the first of these observations, the writer has profited much by carrying besides his regular putter a Schenectady for all short putts. But as to the second, it has continued to be at all times an exasperating puzzle.

Let us put the theory to practical test and discover, if possible, in the process why so many short putts go wrong.

Take a golf ball and place it a little less than three feet from the hole—or the ball may be placed on the carpet and the hole indicated by a piece of paper. With putter in left hand, take your usual stance for a short putt. Now point your right forefinger at the ball and look at the ball first with both eyes open, then with the right eye closed. In the first instance the finger will be seen pointing directly at the ball, but in the second considerably to the right and below.

Now address the ball with putter exactly as you would when prepared to putt. In nine cases out of ten with the ordinary putter you will shorten your grip and play the stroke off the left foot—more or less. Also, in all probability, just to avert the dreaded possibility of looking up, you will twist your chin to the right and in so doing slightly elevate your right eye and so disarrange the right eye's perpendicular line of sight to the ball. Unconsciously you have transferred control from the right or Master eye to the left or Subordinate eye, and the consequence is a missed putt.

More often than not you look up at the hole just as the club-head strikes the ball. But that has not caused the miss, for the looking up is merely the psychological effect of a mysterious subconsciousness that something—you know not what—has gone wrong with your stroke.

It would appear that the short putt is missed so less frequently with the Schenectady putter for the following reasons:—the stance is generally upright, and the grip is not usually shortened, the ball is not played off the left foot but half way between the feet, while the Master eye maintains control in a perpendicular line to the ball.

Effect on the Drive

NOW let us consider the matter with relation to the drive. We all know from bitter experience that if the body sways, or the head moves, or if we shall press, the drive is a complete or partial failure. As a matter of fact, it is not these primary faults themselves, but the consequence of any of them that is to blame. They cause the Master eye to lose control and the drive goes exasperatingly wrong.

Place a ball on the ground and with driver in the left hand take your ordinary stance. Point your finger at the ball with both eyes open, then with left eye only. Now, with right eye closed and left eye open, point your finger at the ball, then, holding your finger steady, open the right eye and...
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with both eyes look along the finger. To one who has never tried it before, this simple test is a revelation.

Now with club gripped in both hands, both eyes open, make a full upward swing for a drive. At the very top of the swing you will be looking at the ball over your left shoulder. Here pause and hold the pose.

First of all close the right eye and look at the ball with the left eye. It is in plain sight. Now close the left eye, open the right and look at the ball. If nothing has gone wrong with your swing, if the head has not moved a particle, you will be conscious of seeing your nose and the ball immediately in front of it. But if the body has been pulled away, if the head has moved but a trifle, if you have swung too far, the ball will be out of sight of your right or Master eye, hidden by your nose.

Another Test

Now, still holding the pose, open your left eye. With both eyes open the ball will appear in plain sight, but actually in sight of the Subordinate left eye only. Had you not made the test you would be wholly unaware of the fact that at the top of your swing the ball was out of sight, and the control of the Master eye and your drive under the domination of the subservient left eye. Of course the drive under these conditions is bound to be a failure.

To meet the situation the writer has adopted an expedient which has vastly improved his own driving. On starting the upward swing he half closes the left eye, a practice common in rifle shooting, and by this means the Master eye is made to dominate the stroke. Also, he is conscious of seeing his nose, and when his swing has carried so far that the ball is observed just in front of the nose, he is aware that the limit of the upward swing has been reached, and starts downward with clubhead with cheerful confidence that the Master eye is on the job in complete control of the stroke.

The ancient admonition—Keep your eye on the ball—ought to be amended to read. Keep your Master eye on the ball.